

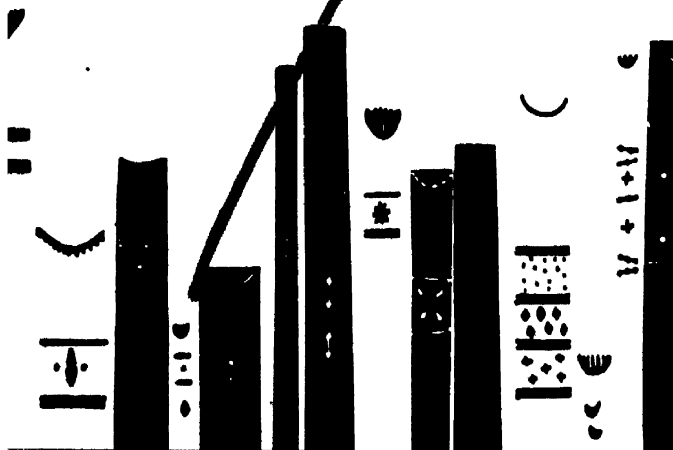
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NEW DIRECTIONS 1941

EDITOR: JAMES LAUGHLIN

NEW DIRECTIONS

IN PROSE & POETRY

1941



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TO CAREY BRIGGS

*If there were in every school a teacher
of his caliber there would be a real
audience for fine writing and
great literature*

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

HEINZ BERGGRUEN, who has translated the Kafka fable in this volume, came from Germany and is now living under the shadow of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. He edits a book page for the magazine *The Coast* and writes stories.

JOHN BERRYMAN was one of the poets in our *Five Young American Poets of 1940* and he will be featured in an issue of *The Poet of The Month* in 1942.

One of the editors of the aggressive little magazine *Diogenes* is ARTHUR BLAIR of Madison, Wisconsin.

The great modern German poet BERTOLT BRECHT is now living in Santa Monica, California. Readers who wish to know about him should look up two excellent articles, one by Clement Greenburg which appeared in *The Partisan Review* and one by Frank Jones which appeared in *Diogenes*, both in the past year. Brecht's novel *A Penny For The Poor*, converted from his libretto for the Kurt Weill *Dreigroschenoper*, is available in English, published a few years back by Hillman. Brecht should be much better known, as he is an artist of very great power. He deeply influenced the Auden group of young English writers. *New Directions* will issue his verse play *The Death of Lucullus*, also translated by H. R. Hays, as the March number of *The Poet of The Month Series* in 1942. Brecht's full-length play *St. Joan of the Stockyards* has been translated by Frank Jones and it is hoped to include it in *New Directions 1942*. Brecht first won recognition for his use of the old German folk-verse forms for biting modern satire. Later he wrote historical plays, such as *Mother Courage, Galileo, Lucullus*, in which old stories are used to drive home modern meanings. Later he went through a violent Communist phase and became practically the poet laureate of Communist Germany. He took refuge in Finland when the Nazis came in and finally made good his escape to the U. S. A.

The acknowledged leader of the French Surrealist movement, ANDRÉ BRETON, is now living in New York City, to the great enrichment of our local culture. His most recent long poem *Fata Morgana*, translated by Clark Mills and illustrated by Wifredo Lam, was scheduled to be published in Marseilles after the fall of France, but was banned by the Vichy government censors. We have reproduced on the title page of the poem the actual censor's stamp and notation which was on Mr. Breton's manuscript when it was returned to him. Wifredo Lam, the artist, is a Cuban, and a protégé of Picasso.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

JOHN MALCOLM BRINNIN is now living in Ann Arbor. His *Lincoln Lyrics*, a series of short poems based on scenes from the life of Lincoln, will be the August 1942 issue of *The Poet of The Month*.

HUGH CHISHOLM lives in Beverly Hills, California. His verse has been rather widely published in English periodicals.

BABETTE DEUTSCH, who has done some translations for our Russian section, lives in New York City and is well known for her poetry, translations and critical writing. She recently completed translations from Rainer Maria Rilke's *Stundenbuch* (*The Book of Hours*) which we issued as the December number of *The Poet of The Month* for 1941.

HELEN EUSTIS lives in Northampton, Mass. She is the wife of Alfred Young Fisher and has two little children.

BEN FIELD is a perfect example of why the American commercial publishing system ought to be housecleaned. There are probably not twenty writers in America today who are better writers than Field, but commercial publishers shun him because, like W. C. Williams, he gives a real picture of life in America instead of a sugar- (or slime-) coated one. He does not fall into the field of *New Directions* because there is nothing particularly experimental about his work. It is just very good straight writing. He published one volume, *The Cock's Funeral*, and has several other manuscripts waiting for the printer. He has worked as a farmer in up-state New York and is now working in the Southern tobacco fields.

The Ghost in The Underblows, the very remarkable long poem by ALFRED YOUNG FISHER can be obtained from The Ward Ritchie Press, Los Angeles. The poem was edited for book publication by Lawrence Clark Powell, who eliminated several sections which he felt were not central to the main theme of the poem. One of these fragments is here published in *New Directions* and we hope it will lead many readers to the whole poem, which is certainly one of the really significant creative efforts in recent poetry. Fisher is teaching at Smith College in Northampton. He is the husband of Helen Eustis, who also appears in this volume.

CHARLES HENRI FORD is the author of *The Garden of Disorder* (published some years ago by *New Directions*), and *The Overturned Lake*, recently issued by The Little Man Press of Cincinnati. He is now at work on a group of translations from Baudelaire which will be included in our *Poet of The Month* pamphlet series in the not distant future. Ford is active as an editor of the poetry newspaper *View*.

BERNARD GEDANKEN lives in New Jersey, but attends the University of Iowa, hotbed of literary culture in the middle west, where he works with Wilbur L. Schramm and writes for *American Prefaces*.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

FRANCIS GOLFFING, who translates Gracq's *Chateau d'Argol* in this volume, is a native of Vienna, now living in California, where he is associated with the Yvor Winters group at Stanford. He is now at work on an important project for New Directions—a book on *The French Symbolist Poets*, which will include essays on Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Mallarmé, Laforgue, Corbière, Verlaine and other important figures of the period, together with translations of their best poems, the original French texts included. It is hoped to issue this volume in the late spring of 1942.

One of the better known French writers now living in New York is IVAN GOLL. His "John Landless" (*Jean Sans Terre*) poems have appeared in many different literary periodicals and are currently being collected into book form.

This is a busy year for PAUL GOODMAN, who was first introduced to New Directions readers in our 1940 volume. His novel *The Red Piano* is being issued by The Colt Press of San Francisco, and he is featured in our *Five Young American Poets of 1941*. Some of Goodman's *Noh Plays* have been privately printed by a friend and may be obtained, we believe, from The Gotham Book Mart in New York City. In the summer of 1942 New Directions hopes to issue a volume of Goodman's short pieces and plays. He is also a frequent contributor to *The Partisan Review* and lives in New York City.

Chateau d'Argol, the post-Surrealist, neo-Romantic novel by JULIEN GRACQ was published in Paris by José Corti not long before the war, and was enthusiastically received. Gracq's exact whereabouts are not now known. He served in the French army and it is believed that he may be still in prison camp in Germany. We publish this year a summary of *Argol* and translations of its preface and final chapter by Francis Golffing.

H. R. HAYS, who translated Brecht's play *Mother Courage* and also contributes original verse to the Little Anthology of Contemporary Poetry, was the editor of the little magazine *The New Act*. He has been working in an editorial capacity on the anthology of *Latin American Poetry* which New Directions will publish in the Spring of 1942.

ROBERT HIRNOR now holds a fellowship in the School of Drama at Yale. He is the author of the novel *The Invader*, which New Directions will publish in 1942. He was loathe to permit the editor to print his poems, which he thinks of as "doodlings," but the editor thinks that if more people could "doodle" like that American poetry would be considerably more lively.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

NOAH JACOBS is a serious student of semantics as well as a genial satirist of the subject. He hails from Pittsburgh and this year is teaching at the University of Havana in Cuba.

The work of J. CALDER JOSEPH, who lives on Long Island, has been published by The Little Man Press and has appeared in several magazines.

Readers who love the work of FRANZ KAFKA, the great Czech writer who died in 1924, are urged to write letters of exhortation to Mr. Alfred Knopf, 501 Madison Avenue, New York City, urging him to bring out the collected short stories of Kafka. An English publisher is thinking of having all of Kafka's still untranslated pieces done into English by the very capable Edwin Muir, and with a little stimulation from this side of the Atlantic the project will go through. New Directions would love to bring out this book but defers to Mr. Knopf, who first published Kafka over here, with *The Castle*, if he will do it. He says he wants to do it but he seems to need a little prodding. Mr. Knopf has done more than any other American publisher to bridge the Atlantic by translating significant foreign-language writers and it is to be hoped that he will do the collected Kafka stories. If he won't, New Directions certainly will. The situation calls for clarification, which the Kafka public could expedite by showing their interest. It is surprising that the little fable which we offer in this volume has never before been translated, because it is pure Kafka, in fact, almost the ultimate distillation of Kafka's outlook, message and method. Late in 1942 New Directions will publish a study of Kafka by Horace Gregory in its Makers of Modern Literature Series.

H. J. KAPLAN lives in Chicago.

Last summer GEORGE KAUFFMAN shipped to sea to the Orient. Now he is back in Berkeley, California, engaging in the radical political work that means so much to him.

ALEXANDER KAUN professes Russian Literature at the University of California in Berkeley. He is now completing a book on modern Russian writers.

WELDON KEES is now under contract to Alfred A. Knopf for a series of novels. Kees lives in Denver, where he is head of the Bibliographical Center of the allied libraries of that section. He can beat out good noise on a piano.

CLARENCE JOHN LAUGHLIN is not a relative of the editor. He lives in New Orleans, where his photo-poems were shot. He is now in New York on a photographic assignment. Some of his prints are in the Soby collection in Hartford, and he has had a show at the Julien Levy Gallery.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

MEYER LIBEN was first represented in *New Directions* in 1940. He lives in New York City.

HUGH MACDIARMID is generally considered the foremost Scottish poet of this period. It is an outrage that his very fine work is not better known over here. He is a man of middle age now and has published many volumes of verse. A selection of his work will soon be issued by The Colt Press of San Francisco and is strongly recommended to all serious partisans of poetry. The Macmillan Company has recently brought out a treasury of Scottish verse edited by MacDiarmid.

The first student to take his degree at Chicago under President Hutchins' "new plan" whereby the whole course is covered as quickly as the student can do it was GEORG KARL FRIEDRICH MANN, who ran the distance in a new world's record time. He was born in St. Paul in 1913 and now lives with his wife in Chicago, where he edits a science magazine. "Azeff Wischmeier" is one section of a forthcoming book of satires. The rest of the book will be concerned with the careers of the other Wischmeiers. It will discuss with equal objectivity such topics as American social science, neo-scholasticism, fascism, academic literary scholarship and the gentlemanly ideal.

Well known for her verse, EVE MERRIAM of New York City now makes her debut in the field of prose fiction.

JOSEPHINE MILES teaches English at the University of California in Berkeley. Her field of research is a very interesting one. She received her doctorate for a thesis on word use in English and she has made interesting studies on the role of types of vocabulary in poetic idiom. Her first book of poems, *Lines At Intersection*, was published a few years ago by Macmillan, her second, *Poems On Several Occasions*, as the July number of The Poet of The Month in 1941.

CLARK MILLS, who has made the translation of André Breton's *Fata Morgana*, teaches French at Cornell. He is one of the poets in our *Five Young American Poets of 1941* and author of several books of verse published by James A. Decker of Prairie City, Illinois, among them a translation of Mallarmé's *Herodias*. He has also issued translations of the work of Ivan Goll.

HARRY THORNTON MOORE is rapidly becoming our leading authority on poetry recordings. When he is not declaiming Hamlet, Macbeth or Othello to his admiring offspring he teaches English at Northwestern in Evanston, Illinois, or works on his book on D. H. Lawrence, or his historical novel of the Cromwell period in England.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

NICHOLAS MOORE is a young English poet who is making quite a reputation for himself in England. He is a member of the group which calls itself "The New Apocalypse" and might be described, historically at least, as the next step after Dylan Thomas and English Surrealism. This group has recently published an interesting anthology which is worth examination. The editor is ashamed to say that he has mislaid his copy and cannot recall the exact title of it, but readers can certainly obtain it from The Gotham Book Mart in New York City.

WRIGHT MORRIS is continuing his very interesting experiments with the camera as a literary instrument. He lives in Brooklyn, but goes out on long photographing tours of the west and south. Not long ago he had a show of his work at the Direction gallery in New York City.

SAMUEL FRENCH MORSE lives in Danvers, Massachusetts and teaches English at Harvard.

VLADIMIR NABOKOV who translates Hodassevich in our Russian section, is now lecturing at Wellesley College. A Russian, member of a great aristocratic family, cousin of the composer Nicholas Nabokov, he was educated at Cambridge and lived in France and Germany after the Revolution. He wrote some twenty books—novels and stories—which were widely translated in Europe, winning him an important reputation. New Directions has just issued his novel *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight* and a number of his stories have appeared recently in *The Atlantic*. Several years ago Bobbs-Merrill published his novel *Laughter In The Dark*. His other books have not yet been done in English translations, but they will be. Nabokov is a chess fiend and lepidopterologist. He is married and has a young son.

Certain explanations are in order with regard to EZRA POUND, who is still living in Italy. People who hear him broadcasting for the Italian Government do not realize that possibly he has no choice in the matter. If they knew, for example, that he cannot leave Italy because he has close dependents who are not American citizens, they would perhaps be more charitable in their judgments. Those are the facts in the case. In 1942 New Directions will issue a selection of the finest passages from Pound's *Cantos* as a pamphlet in The Poet of The Month Series. A booklet explaining the structure and metric of the *Cantos* is available free on request to the New Directions office at Norfolk, Conn.

One of the most promising of the younger English poets is F. T. PRINCE whose first volume, *Poems*, was published two years ago by Faber & Faber in London. A smaller collection of his work was issued as the October 1941 number of The Poet of The Month.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Probably the best known Swiss writer of the day is DENIS DE ROUGEMONT, author of numerous volumes on philosophical, political and critical subjects. About a year ago Harcourt Brace published his study of *Love In The Western World*. This past summer de Rougemont has been lecturing in the Argentine.

ROGER ROUGHTON's story was first published by T. S. Eliot some years ago in the *Criterion*. The editor has not been able to communicate with Roughton (there is a rumour that he was killed fighting in the Spanish Civil War) but felt that this remarkable work should be shown to American readers.

SANDERS RUSSELL, a young New York poet, has been associated with the group publishing *The Experimental Review* at Woodstock.

VERA SANDOMERSKY has worked untiringly on her part in our Russian Poetry section. She divides her time between New York and Chicago.

ISIDORE SCHNEIDER who contributes translations to our Russian poetry section was responsible for an excellent booklet on Mayakovsky put out not long ago by the American Russian Institute. It contains numerous translations together with biographical and critical material and should not be missed by readers interested in Russian literature.

New Directions published recently another verse play—*Shenandoah*—by DELMORE SCHWARTZ in The Poet of The Month Series. Schwartz is teaching at Harvard as a Briggs-Copeland Fellow. He is at work on a long poem, *Genesis*, which we hope to release in the Spring of 1942. His first book was *In Dreams Begin Responsibilities* and his second was a translation of Rimbaud's *Season In Hell*.

CHARLES SNIDER lives in San Francisco and is active in left-wing politics there. A booklet of his verse has recently been issued by The Little Man Press, Hutton Street, Cincinnati.

PAUL WREN sends his poems from Brooklyn. He is at work on a book about the life of Rimbaud.

MARGUERITE YOUNG lives in Indianapolis. Her first book of poems *Prismatic Ground* was published a few years ago by Macmillan.

LEONID ZNAKOMY lives in Cleveland, where he collaborates with Dan Levin in the field of Russian letters.

MOTHER COURAGE

BY

BERTOLT BRECHT

...

TRANSLATED BY

H. R. HAYS

CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

ANNA FIERLING, sutler, known as MOTHER COURAGE.

DUMB KATTRIN, her daughter.

EILIF, her son.

SWISSCHEESE, her second son.

THE COOK.

THE CHAPLAIN.

YVETTE POTIER.

A GENERAL.

A SERGEANT, OFFICERS, SOLDIERS, CITIZENS, PEASANTS.

The supporting roles can easily be doubled.

SCENES

A COUNTRY ROAD WITH A SWEDISH CITY IN THE BACKGROUND.

IN THE GENERAL'S TENT.

A CAMP.

IN FRONT OF AN OFFICER'S TENT.

IN A DESTROYED VILLAGE.

IN THE SUTLER'S TENT DURING THE RAIN.

IN THE WOODS IN FRONT OF A CITY.

IN FRONT OF A PARSONAGE IN WINTER.

NEAR A FARMER'S STRAW-ROOFED HOUSE.

The chief part of the set is Courage's covered cart from which one can see her changing financial condition.

The backgrounds can be painted on simple drops. The short scenes on the road can be done in front of the curtain. Costumes in the usual gay style found in historical plays should be guarded against. These should show the wretchedness of the long war.

MOTHER COURAGE

ACT I

SCENE I

Spring, 1624. Field-Marshal Oxenstyern raises troops in Darlarne for the campaign in Poland. The Sutler, Anna Fierling, known by the name of Mother Courage, comes to enlist a son.

A country road. In the background a city. A Color Sergeant and a Recruiting Officer stand shivering in the wind.

OFFICER: How can we get together a levy of men here, Sergeant? It's enough to drive a man to suicide! I must have four companies for the Field Marshal by the twelfth and the people hereabout are so spiteful that I can't sleep nights. If I do dig up someone and shut my eyes to his chickenbreast and varicose veins and get him happily drunk and his name registered and pay for the schnapps and he drinks it and steps out the door, I right behind him because I'm a little uneasy, first thing you know he's gone like a flea on a griddle. There's no plighted word, no faith and honesty, no sense of honor. I've lost my faith in humanity, Sergeant.

SERGEANT: It's plain they've gone too long without a war here. What's the moral, I ask you? Peace is nothing but slovenliness. It takes war to put things in order. Humanity goes to seed in peacetime. Men and cattle have to be ordered around or it's no good. Everyone eats what he likes, a chunk of cheese on white bread and before you know it a strip of bacon on the cheese. No one knows how many young folks and good horses this city used to have. They were never counted. Why I've been in neighborhoods where there hadn't been a war for about seventy years and the people didn't even know their own names! They didn't know who they were! Only where there's a war are there orderly lists and registration and shoe leather comes in rolls and corn in a sack and people and cattle are carefully

counted and carried off because we know: without order, no war.

OFFICER: How right you are! Look, here comes a covered cart. Two women and two young lads. Stop the woman, Sergeant. If this turns out to be nothing again, I tell you I'll stand no more in this April wind.

(Sound of a harmonica. The covered cart rolls on, pulled by two young lads. On it sits Mother Courage and her Dumb Daughter.)

COURAGE: Good morning, Sergeant!

SERGEANT *(Barring the road)*: One moment, you people! Who are you?

COURAGE *(Sings)*:

Good Captain, pray set down the drum
And let the regiment fall out.
I'm Mother Courage and I come
To sell you shoes both strong and stout.
With lousy shirts, with weary feet,
With horses, cannons, guns and gear,
Though it be death you march to meet,
Still you must have good shoes to wear.

And spring returns. Arise, Oh Christ!
The snow melts fast. The dead are clay.
And all that's left alive on earth
Must be up and on its way.

Bonebare this land and picked of meat,
The fame is yours but where's the bread?
So here I bring you food to eat
And wine to slake and soothe your dread.
For guns on empty guts are queasy
And men grow pale, so I've heard tell.
With bellies full the rest is easy.
Go, lead them to the jaws of hell.

BRECHT

And spring returns. Arise, Oh Christ!
The snow melts fast. The dead are clay.
And all that's left alive on earth
Must be up and on its way.

SERGEANT: Where do you belong, you trollop?

OLDER SON: Second Finnish Regiment.

SERGEANT: Where are your papers?

COURAGE: Papers?

YOUNG SON: This is Mother Courage.

SERGEANT: Never heard of her. Why is she called Courage?

COURAGE: Sergeant, I'm called Courage because I was afraid of being ruined and went through fire at Riga with fifty loaves of bread in my cart. They were getting mouldy and it was high time. I had no choice.

SERGEANT: No jokes, now. Where are the papers?

COURAGE (*Drags a mass of papers out of an account book and waves them*): There are my papers, Sergeant. There's a whole ledger from Altötting to the storming of Gurken and a map of Moravia, God knows if I'll ever get there but it's not worth a damn otherwise and here's a seal on it to show my white horse hasn't got the hoof and mouth disease, it's a pity he was no good, he cost fifteen guilders, thank God I didn't pay it. Is that enough papers?

SERGEANT: Are you trying to make up to me? I'll knock the impudence out of you. You know you've got to have a license.

COURAGE: Treat me with respect and stop telling my half-grown children I'm trying to make up to you. It's indecent. I want nothing to do with you, my license with the Second Regiment is my respectable face and if you can't read that, I can't help it. I won't have a stamp put on it.

SERGEANT (*Takes the papers to the wagon to draw her away from her son*): There's such a wind I have to look them over in a sheltered spot.

(*Officer approaches Older Son.*)

COURAGE: I don't find it drafty. Yes, time has taught me plenty about such nonsense. Especially where war is concerned. War isn't an everyday matter. If it goes on, and up to now the end isn't in sight, God be praised, still it's bound to stop sometime. Winter is bad for it, it has a hard time in winter and mid-summer is bad for it, too. Then it's likely to get stuck and can't go on. In that case how should I live? From what? Well, I'll have to look around.

SERGEANT: Your name.

COURAGE: Anna Fierling.

SERGEANT: So you're all Fierlings.

COURAGE: How so? I'm called Fierling. Not them.

SERGEANT: I assume these children are all yours?

COURAGE: They are but does that mean they all have to have the same name? (*Goes and points out her older son*) This one, for example, is named Eilif Mojocki. If you want to know why, it's because his father always maintained his name was Kojocki or Mojocki. The boy remembers him very well, that is, he remembers someone else, a Frenchman with a pointed beard. But at any rate he inherits his intelligence from his father. He can steal a farmer's britches off his legs without him knowing it. And so each of us has his own name.

SERGEANT: You mean to say each has a different name?

COURAGE: You act as if you didn't understand.

SERGEANT (*Pointing to Young Son*): Then I suppose that one's got a Chinese name.

COURAGE: Wrong that time. Swiss.

SERGEANT: After the Frenchman?

COURAGE: After what Frenchman? I never heard of any Frenchman. Don't ball things up or we'll be here all night. A Swiss name, only he's called Fejos, a name that has nothing to do with his father. His name was something entirely different and he was a fortification engineer, only he drank.

SERGEANT: Then how can his name be Fejos?

COURAGE: Don't take offense but you haven't much imagination.

He is called Fejos, of course, because when he came I was with a Hungarian, it was all the same to him anyway, he had kidney trouble although he never touched a drop, a very honest fellow. The boy takes after him.

SERGEANT: But he still wasn't the father?

COURAGE: But he takes after him. I call him Swisscheese. (*Pointing to her daughter*) Her name is Kattrin Haupt, she's half German.

SERGEANT: A neat family, I must say.

COURAGE: Yes, I've been all over the world with this covered cart of mine.

SERGEANT: All of this shall be noted down. (*He writes it down.*)

OFFICER (*To Eilif*): You two ought to be called Jacob and Esau Ox instead. Don't they ever unhitch you?

EILIF: Mother, I'd like to clout him in the face. May I?

COURAGE: I forbid it. Stay where you are.

SERGEANT: I see your children are as lusty as young birchtrees. Broad chests, stocky calves: why is all this kept out of the army, I'd like to know?

COURAGE (*Quickly*): None of that, Sergeant. This business of war is not for my children.

SERGEANT: But why not? You get money and fame that way. Peddling boots is women's work. (*To Eilif*) Step up and let us see if you're a weakling or if you've got muscles.

COURAGE: He's a weakling. He's likely to fall down if you look at him too hard.

OFFICER: And kill a calf if it stands beside him, like a tree falling, eh?

COURAGE: Will you kindly leave him alone? A coward like that is not for you. Howls if he has to fetch a loaf of bread in the night.

SERGEANT: He insulted me rudely enough, the way he talked about my face. We'll step into the field and have it out, man to man.

EILIF: Never mind. I can take care of him.

COURAGE: You stay there, you peck of trouble. I know you. Nothing but brawling. (*To Officer*) He has a knife in his boot. And he can stab with it.

OFFICER: I'll draw it like a milk-tooth. Come along, youngster.

COURAGE: I'll tell the Colonel, Sergeant. He'll put you in the guardhouse. And besides, the Lieutenant is courting my daughter.

SERGEANT: No coercion, Brother. (*To Mother Courage*) What have you got against army service? Wasn't his father a soldier? And didn't he fall like an honest man? You said so yourself.

COURAGE: He's just a child. I know you, you want to carry him off to be slaughtered. You'll get five guilders for him.

OFFICER: And anyway he'll get topboots and a nice cap.

COURAGE: Do you want to go fishing with me, said the fisherman to the worm. (*To Swisscheese*) Run off and yell: they're trying to steal your brother. (*She fetches a knife from the cart*) Now try and steal him. I'll cut your heart out, you scum. I'll fix you if you try to make war with him. We sell honest linens and smoked ham and we're peaceable folk.

SERGEANT: I can see from that knife how peaceable you are. You ought to be ashamed of yourself. Put that knife away, you slut. A minute ago you were saying there ought to be war, you were praying for it. How else could you live? From what? Now how can there be a war without soldiers?

COURAGE: They mustn't be mine.

SERGEANT: So you'll eat war to the core and spit out the seeds? Your brood is to get fat from war and pay no taxes? They can tremble when it comes to their own necks, hey? You're called Courage, eh, and you're afraid of war, your breadwinner? Take a look at me: has a soldier's life done me any harm? I started at seventeen.

COURAGE: You're not seventy yet.

SERGEANT: I can hope to reach it.

COURAGE: Underground maybe.

SERGEANT: Are you trying to make me angry? Telling me I'm going to die!

COURAGE: What if it's the truth? If I see that you're marked? If you have a look like a corpse on a furlough, eh?

SWISSCHEESE: She has second sight. Everyone says so. Yes, she can read the future.

SERGEANT: Really? Then you shall tell my fortune. I don't believe a word of it. (*He laughs.*)

COURAGE: Give me your helmet! (*He gives it to her.*)

SERGEANT: Of course this is just a shot in the dark.

COURAGE: Then I don't need to show you your fate if it doesn't mean anything.

SERGEANT: Oh well . . . just for a joke.

COURAGE: So you're not such a Hercules after all? (*She takes a piece of parchment and tears it into strips*) Eilif, Swisscheese and Kattrin, we're all likely to be torn to bits like this if we get too deeply involved in war. (*To Sergeant*) Death is black. I draw a black cross on the lot.

SWISSCHEESE: And she leaves the others blank, you see.

COURAGE: Then I fold them together and shake them all up as we are mixed in our mother's womb and now you draw and know for sure.

SERGEANT (*Fishes in the helmet, trembling*): Idiocy! Nothing but eyewash!

SWISSCHEESE: He's drawn the black cross. He's done for!

OFFICER: You're done for, Brother. Too bad.

SERGEANT (*Heated*): A stinking trick!

COURAGE: Which you played on yourself when you joined the army.

SERGEANT: Hell and Damnation, now you're going to do the same for your own cubs and I'll watch until every lot is in my helmet. (*Points to Eilif*) What's more, we'll take him. He's to be a soldier.

EILIF: Mother, I'd like to join up.

COURAGE: Shut your face, you Finnish devil. All right, I'll let

you draw lots, every one of you. (*She goes aside and puts black crosses on all the lots without the others seeing her*) Wants to run away from his mother and into the war like a calf after salt. But I'll question the lots and they'll soon see this world is no bed of roses. What with "come, my son, we need Captains," and "Steal a surplice and you'll be chaplain of the regiment." (*She comes back with the helmet full of lots*) Sergeant, they have very bad futures, it can't be helped. I fear the worst for them, they might not get through the war. They have terrible qualities: all three. (*She holds out the helmet to Eilif*) There, fish out your lot. (*He draws, unfolds it, she snatches it from him*) So you have it, a cross! Oh unlucky mother that I am! Giving birth to sorrow! He will die! In the prime of life and he's done for! If he joins up as a soldier, he'll bite the dust, that's clear. Like his father, he's too brave. If he isn't smart, he'll go the way of all flesh. The lot shows it. (*She turns on him*) Do you want to be smart?

EILIF: Why not?

COURAGE: If you're smart, you'll stay with your mother and if they jeer and call you a weakling, laugh in their faces.

OFFICER: If you're going to skulk, I'll try your brother.

COURAGE: I told you to laugh in his face. Laugh then. And now, fish out yours, Swisscheese. I have less to fear for you, you're honest. (*He draws*) Now why are you looking at the lot so queerly? Of course it's blank. It can't be there's a cross on it. I shan't lose you. (*She takes it*) A cross. Him, too. Can it be true when he's so simple? Oh, Swisscheese, if you aren't always honest through and through as I've taught you to be even from the time you didn't bring back the change from selling bread, you're lost. That's the only thing that can save you. Look here, Sergeant, and see if it isn't a cross!

SERGEANT: A cross it is. I don't understand. I've been holding the one I drew behind me. (*To Officer*) She can't be cheating. After all, it's her own flesh and blood.

OFFICER (*To Eilif*): Don't let it worry you. Women like nothing better than soldiers.

COURAGE (*To Kattrin*): And now you're the only one I'm sure to keep. You're a cross yourself. What sort of a help to me are you? And all the same what a good heart you have! You shall put an end to this and send our cart on its way. (*She holds up the helmet but takes out the lot herself*) This really makes me doubtful. It doesn't make sense, perhaps I made a mistake when I shuffled them. To be sure it's nothing but superstition and doesn't mean anything. Don't you think so, Sergeant? For if you don't, then we're all bound to die. Well, Kattrin, don't be so good-natured, not any more. There's a cross marked on your path. Always keep very quiet and that's not so hard, seeing you were born dumb. Now how can someone like this get mixed up in such a business and talk herself into trouble when she can't speak? It doesn't worry me. I have made a mistake! Only be careful, all of you, you need to be. And now we'll all get in and travel on.

SERGEANT: I don't feel so well.

OFFICER: Perhaps you caught cold, lending your helmet in this wind. (*Sergeant snatches the helmet.*)

COURAGE: And you, give me back my papers. Someone else may want to see them and then I'll have no papers. (*She puts them back in the ledger.*)

OFFICER (*To Eilif*): You can at least take a look at the boots. And I'll stand treat like a good fellow. From that you can see that I have a bit of cash on me. Come behind the wagon. (*They go behind the cart.*)

SERGEANT: I don't understand it. I kept my lot behind my back all the time. And there's no safer rank than Sergeant. You can send the others ahead to win all the glory. My whole morning is spoiled. I hardly know who I've enlisted.

COURAGE (*Goes up to him*): Don't take it so much to heart as to spoil your appetite. Brace up. Here, have a swallow of schnapps

BRECHT

and no hard feeling. (*She goes to the wagon and gets him a drink.*)

OFFICER (*Who has taken Eilif by the arm and drawn him behind the wagon*): You're done for, one way or the other. You drew a cross, so what's the difference? Ten guilders in the hand and you're a brave fellow and fight for the king and women tear each other to pieces over you. And me you can smack in the jaw because I insulted you. (*They exit.*)

(*Dumb Kattrin makes a hoarse outcry because she notices the abduction.*)

COURAGE: Directly, Kattrin, directly. The Sergeant is in a bad way. He is superstitious and I didn't know it. And now we'll travel on. Where's Eilif?

SWISSCHEESE: He must have gone off with the recruiting officer. He's been talking with him all this time.

COURAGE (*Stands motionless, then speaks*): You simpleton! (*To Kattrin*) I know . . . you can't talk. It's not your fault.

SERGEANT: Better have a swallow of schnapps yourself, Mother. Well, so it goes. A soldier isn't the worst of men. You'd live from war but you'd keep you and yours out of it, eh?

COURAGE (*Motions Kattrin down from the wagon*): Swisscheese, now you and your sister will have to pull it.

(*The Brother and Sister hitch themselves to the wagon and start pulling. Mother Courage walks beside it. It rolls on.*)

SERGEANT (*Looking after it*): From war you'd live,
To war you must give.

SCENE 2

In the years 1625 and '26 Mother Courage crossed Poland in the baggage train of the Swedish army. Outside the castle of Wallhof she met her son once more. Lucky sale of a capon and a great day for her brave son.

The General's tent. Near it, the kitchen. Sound of cannon. The

Cook is quarreling with Mother Courage who is trying to sell a capon.

COOK: Sixty hellers for such a miserable bird?

COURAGE: What do you mean, miserable bird? This fat fowl? You mean to say a general who's always stuffing himself (and you'd better watch out if you don't have something for lunch) won't pay fifty little hellers?

COOK: I can get a dozen like this just around the corner.

COURAGE: Indeed, you'll get a capon like this just around the corner? When there's such hunger in this siege that ribs are caving in. You might possibly get a field mouse, possibly, I say, since even they have been gobbled up. Why there have been five men half a day on the trail of a hungry field mouse. Fifty hellers for a huge capon and during a siege!

COOK: We're not besieged, it's the others. We're the ones who *lay* siege. Get that into your head.

COURAGE: But we, too, have nothing to eat, even less than they have in the city. They lugged everything in with them. They live on the fat of the land, I've heard tell. As for us, I've been to the farmers and they haven't a thing.

COOK: They have, but they hide it.

COURAGE (*Triumphantly*): They have nothing. They're ruined, that's what they are. They're gnawing on nothing. I've seen some of them digging up roots for fuel and they lick their fingers after boiled leather. That's how it is. And I have a capon I'll let go for forty hellers.

COOK: Thirty, not forty, I said thirty.

COURAGE: I wouldn't have got this one if I hadn't read a notice for a milkwoman about shortweight. And the woman who let it go got so badly beaten by her husband that she can't sit. This is no ordinary capon. I hear it was such a talented fowl that it wouldn't eat unless you played music for it and it had a favorite march. It was so intelligent it could do sums. And

you mean to say forty hellers is too much? The General will wring your neck if you don't serve it up to him.

COOK: Do you see what I'm doing? (*He takes a piece of beef and lays his knife on it*) Here is a piece of beef. I'm going to roast it. I'll give you one more chance to think it over.

COURAGE: Roast it then. It's a week old.

COOK: It's fresh today. The ox was running around a minute ago. I saw it personally and I'll cook it five hours, if I have to.

We'll see if it's still tough then. (*He cuts the beef.*)

COURAGE: Put in a lot of pepper to kill the stink.

(*The General, a Chaplain and Eilif enter the tent.*)

GENERAL: Now Eilif, my son, inside the tent with your General and sit at my right hand. For you've performed a heroic deed like a pious knight and what you did, you did for God. I have the highest opinion of you for this and you shall have a gold shoulder stripe as soon as I take the city. We come here to save their souls and what do these shameless and debased pigs of farmers do? They drive off their cattle! And they stick their priests in front and behind them, but you've taught them a lesson. For that I'll pour you a canteen-full of red wine and we'll drink off a quick one. (*They do*) The Chaplain gets the dregs because he's a pious man. And what do you want for lunch, my treasure?

EILIF: Why not a bit of tender meat?

COOK: Here he brings home guests and there's nothing to eat!

(*Mother Courage signs him to be silent because she wants to listen.*)

EILIF: Skinning farmers makes you tired. And hungry.

COURAGE: Lord Jesus, it's my Eilif!

COOK: Who?

COURAGE: My eldest. It's two years since he was snatched from me right in front of my face on the highway and he must be in high favor if the General invites him to dinner. And what have you got to eat, and he a guest: meat! Take my advice and take this capon this minute, it will cost you a guilder.

GENERAL (*Has seated himself with Eilif and the Chaplain and roars at the cook*): Lamb, serve the food, you kitchen beast, or I'll beat you!

COOK: Give it to me, for God's sake, you extortionist.

COURAGE: I thought it was a miserable bird.

COOK: Oh misery, give it to me, fifty hellers, it's the wages of sin!

COURAGE: I said a guilder. Nothing's too dear for my oldest boy, the cherished guest of the General.

COOK: Then dress it, at least, while I put the water on.

(*She sits down to pluck the chicken.*)

COURAGE: How astonished he'd be to see me. He's my brave, clever son. I have a stupid, honest one, too, but that's another matter. My daughter's nothing. But then she doesn't talk, at least, and that's something.

GENERAL: And now, Eilif, my son, tell us just how neatly you outwitted the farmers and captured the twenty oxen. Let's hope they get here soon.

EILIF: In one or two days at most.

COURAGE: That's far-sightedness in my son, Eilif, not to bring the beef in before tomorrow. My capon would have been left in the lurch.

EILIF: Well, it was this way: I found out that the farmers, secretly and mainly at night, were in the habit of driving their hidden oxen from the woods to a particular grove. The people from the city intended to come and fetch them. I let them drive the oxen there in peace. I thought to myself, they will find it easier than I. I made my people mad for meat because I cut their ration for two days and it was low enough already. Why their mouths would water like rivers if they even heard a word that began with M.

GENERAL: That was smart of you.

EILIF: Perhaps. Everything else was merely a detail. Except that the farmers had clubs and outnumbered us three to one and made a murderous attack on us. Four of them came at me in

a gang and carved my sword out of my hand and yelled: surrender. What shall I do, thought I, they'll make mincemeat out of me?

GENERAL: What did you do?

EILIF: I laughed.

GENERAL: You what?

EILIF: I laughed. That's how we got started talking. I began to talk business right away. Twenty guilders for the oxen is too much for me, I said. I'll bid fifteen. Just as though I intended to pay. They were taken aback and began to scratch their heads. So I bent to my steel and cut them to pieces. Necessity knows no law, eh?

CHAPLAIN: To be exact, the phrase is not in the Bible but our Lord was able to produce five hundred loaves out of five by magic when there was no necessity. Since everyone was fed, it was reasonable to expect every man to love his neighbor. To-day it's different.

GENERAL (*Laughs*): Quite different. Now you get a swallow of wine yourself, you Pharisee. (*To Eilif*) You cut them to pieces, did you? Well, it's only right that my stout fellows should get their teeth into a good morsel. Doesn't it say in the Scripture: 'As long as you did it for one of these, you did it for me?' And what did you do for them? You managed a good meal of beef because they're not used to mouldy bread and yet not so long ago they used to take their cup of cold wine and a biscuit with their helmets on because they fought for God.

EILIF: So it was, I bent to my steel and cut them to pieces.

GENERAL: There's a young Caesar in you. You ought to see the King.

EILIF: I have seen him, from a distance. He's got something distinguished about him. I ought to take him as a model.

GENERAL: Do that. I cherish a brave soldier like you, Eilif. I treat a man like you as my own son. Have a drink, Eilif.

COURAGE (*Has been listening and now plucks the chicken angrily*): He must be a bad general.

COOK: A glutton but why a bad one?

COURAGE: Because he has to have brave soldiers. If he can make a good plan of campaign, what does he want brave soldiers for? Ordinary deeds are enough. When there's such heroism it generally means something is rotten.

COOK: I thought it meant something good.

COURAGE: No, something rotten. I'll tell you why. If a general or a king is very stupid he leads his people into the smoke of battle and that calls for the utmost bravery and heroism in the troops. And if he's too greedy and has too few soldiers then they have to be real Hercules, every one of them. And if he's a sloven and pays no attention to anything then they have to be as wily as serpents or they're quite done for. If he urges them on all the time they have to be especially loyal. An orderly country and a good king and a good general don't need real heroes. In a good country everyone can be very ordinary, undistinguished and, as far as I'm concerned, a coward.

GENERAL: I'll wager your father was a soldier.

ELIF: I hear he was a great one. My mother's told me about it. I know a song about it.

GENERAL: Sing it to us. (*Bellows*) Food, this minute!

ELIF: It's called THE GOOD WIFE AND THE SOLDIER. (*Sings*)

The trigger will shoot, the dagger will strike,
If you wade in the water, 'twill freeze you.
Watch out for the ice, keep out if you're wise,
Said the good wife to the soldier.
But the soldier boy with his weapons in place
Harked to the drumming and laughed in her face,
For bugles and drums never hurt you.
From the north to the south, he'll march all his life
And his fingers are made just to handle a knife,
Said the soldiers to the good wife.

Oh bitter you mourn, the counsel you scorn
When you turn a deaf ear to your elders.

BRECHT

In God's name here abide, there's danger outside,
Said the good wife to the soldier.
But the soldier boy with his pistol and sword
Laughed aloud at her words and crossed over the ford,
For how could the cold water hurt him?
When the moon glimmers white on the crest of the knoll
You shall see us again. Now pray for his soul,
Said the soldiers to the good wife.

(Courage from the kitchen continues the song.)

COURAGE:

You are gone with the smoke. And the heat is gone, too.
For your glory can never warm us.
Like a breath it is gone! Then God preserve you!
Said the good wife of the soldier.

(Elif leaps up.)

ELIF: What's that?

COURAGE *(Goes on)*:

And the soldier boy with his pistol and sword
Sank down with the spear and was lost in the ford
And he waded in water that slew him.
And cool on the crest the moon shone white
And the soldier and ice whirled away in the night
And the soldiers they said to the good wife,
He is gone with the smoke and the heat is gone, too,
For his glory will never warm you.
Oh bitter to mourn the counsel you scorn,
Said the good wife to the soldiers.

GENERAL: They do as they please in my kitchen these days.

ELIF *(Has gone into the kitchen and embraces his Mother)*: Do
my eyes deceive me? Where are the others?

COURAGE: Happy as ducks in a puddle. Swisscheese has been
made paymaster of the Second Regiment.

ELIF: How are your feet holding out?

BRECHT

COURAGE: It's hard to get my shoes on in the morning.

ELIF: If it isn't my good luck. Here you sit in the kitchen and hear how splendidly I'm doing.

COURAGE: Yes, I heard it. (*She boxes his ear.*)

ELIF (*Holding her off*): Because I captured the oxen?

COURAGE: No, because you didn't surrender when four came at you to make mincemeat of you. You Finnish devil, is that how I brought you up?

(*The Chaplain and the General stand in the entrance to the tent laughing.*)

SCENE 3

Three years later. Mother Courage is taken prisoner with part of a Finnish regiment. She succeeds in saving her daughter and likewise her covered cart but her honest son dies.

A camp. Regiment colors hang from a flagpole. Mother Courage has strung a clothesline from her cart, thickly hung with all kinds of wares, to a big cannon. She and Kattrin are folding wash on the cannon. At the same time an ordnance inspector is bargaining with her over a sack of shot. Swisscheese, no longer in the uniform of a paymaster, is looking on. A pretty girl, Yvette Potier, sits in front of the covered cart, sewing on a gaily colored hat with a glass of brandy beside her. She is in her stocking feet, her red-heeled shoes beside her.

INSPECTOR: I'll give you the shot for two guilders. It's cheap. I only need the money because the Colonel has asked me for a saddle-blanket, between you and me, for private use.

COURAGE: Those are army munitions. If they find them on me, I'll be up for court martial. If you sell your shot to buy rags the troops will have nothing to shoot at the enemy.

INSPECTOR: Don't be obstinate. One hand washes the other. If you keep it quiet, you can resell it to the inspector of the Fourth

Regiment this very night for five guilders, what am eight at least, if you give him a receipt for twelve.

COURAGE: Why don't you do it yourself?

INSPECTOR: Because I don't trust him. We've quarreled.

COURAGE (*Takes the sack*): Give it here. (*To Kattrin away and pay him a guilder and a half. (Over his p said a guilder and a half. (Kattrin puts the sack away. spector follows her. He is seen taking a drink. Coura to Swisscheese.)* Now you've got your underdrawer pull them up tight. It's October now and we might I tumn soon. I don't say must because I've learned that is sure to be the way you expect, not even the seasons. I regimental treasury books must balance, no matter w pens. Do they?

SWISSCHEESE: Yes, mother.

COURAGE: Don't forget they made you regimental pa because you're sensible and not brave like your brot above all because you're so stupid it would never occu to run off with the cash. That sets my mind at rest. A forget your drawers.

SWISSCHEESE: No, Mother, I'll keep them under my r (*He is about to go.*)

INSPECTOR: I'll go along with you, Paymaster.

YVETTE (*Nods to him*): You could say good day, at least (*Inspector leaves without greeting her.*)

COURAGE: I don't like to see those two together. That's of company for my Swisscheese. (*To Yvette*) Don't yc you shouldn't drink in the morning with your sickness

YVETTE: Who says I'm sick? That's a slander.

COURAGE: Everybody says it.

YVETTE: Because they're all liars.

COURAGE: That's right. It can only have gotten about someone who's been with you spread the rumor you right and everybody who heard him promptly answer heard you were sick. That's how lies are spread.

YVETTE: Mother Courage, I'm in despair. They all avoid me on account of these lies. I don't know why I bother with my hat. (*She throws it away*) That's why I drink in the morning, something I've never done before. It brings on wrinkles but now it's all the same to me. The whole Second Regiment knows me. I should have gone home when the first one threw me over. Pride isn't for us. You have to eat dirt or you're done for.

COURAGE: Now don't start on your Harry and how it all happened in front of my innocent daughter.

YVETTE: That's just why she should hear it, it'll toughen her against love.

COURAGE: No one is proof against that.

YVETTE: I'll tell you the story because it makes it easier to bear. I won't begin with how I grew up in beautiful Flanders. But that's where I met him and that's why I'm stuck here in Poland for he was an army cook, a Dutchman, blond but thin. Look out for the thin ones. I didn't know enough to in those days and I didn't know he was a cook for all the time I only knew him by his nickname, Fife-and-drum-Harry. You see on every furlough he turned someone's head and when the drums began again you could whistle for him. (*She sings the song of FIFE-AND-DRUM-HARRY.*)

You came from Utrecht into Flanders,
 I was barely sixteen, God how young!
 By your promises you won me
 For you had a clever tongue.
 What's your trade, one day, I asked you
 Then you told me, I will swear it's true,
 You had work in the tulip market
 And the regiment was not for you.
 You talked a lot, Harry,
 Not a word true, Harry,
 You deceived me, Harry, even from the first.

I hate you so, Harry,
 You stand there grinning, Harry,
 Take that pipe out of your face, you beast!
 Fife-and-drum-Harry, why are you so rough to me?
 Fife-and-drum-Harry, Oh God I love you so!
 Fife-and-drum-Harry, why can't I be happy?
 You have no heart, Harry, and I love you so.

At first every day was Sunday,
 I was gay and proud to be with you.
 Before a fortnight was over
 There was deceit between us two.
 You work in a rich man's stable,
 You're a cook when I ask you again.
 And I knew how you lied in daytime
 But at night, Oh I believed you then.
 You are in the army, Harry,
 You have lied to me, Harry,
 All I saw, Harry, was the mouth I kissed.
 You wanted all I had, Harry,
 I gave you even more, Harry,
 Take that pipe out of your face, you beast!
 Fife-and-drum-Harry, why are you so rough to me?
 Fife-and-drum-Harry, Oh God I love you so!
 Fife-and-drum-Harry, why can't I be happy?
 You have no heart, Harry, and I love you so!

I didn't suspect the real reason
 Why they called you Harry, all the rest.
 But in all the Flemish taverns
 You were a familiar guest.
 One day, staying at the Helmet,
 I was blind and yet, how could I know?
 Down the street I hear the drums come marching,
 In a uniform, I saw you go.

You have no heart, Harry,
 You're a rascal, Harry,
 You're leaving me, Harry, Oh tell me why at least!
 I love you still, Harry,
 Like the first day, Harry,
 Take that pipe out of your face, you beast!
 Fife-and-drum-Harry, why are you so rough to me?
 Fife-and-drum-Harry, Oh God I love you so!
 Fife-and-drum-Harry, why can't I be happy?
 You have no heart, Harry, and I love you so!

I followed him. It's ten years ago and I've never seen him since.
(She stumbles behind the cart.)

COURAGE: You left your hat behind you.

YVETTE: Whoever wants it can have it.

COURAGE: Let this be a lesson to you, Kattrin. Never start up anything with soldiers. I warn you love has divine power. It's no nectar and ambrosia even for you who aren't with the army. He'll say he'd like to kiss the ground you walk on, as long as I'm right there, and afterward make a slave of you. Be glad you're dumb and can't answer for you'll never want to bite your tongue out for telling the truth. Dumbness is a gift from God if you can manage to pull through the war with its help. And here comes the General's cook. What does he want?

(Cook and the Chaplain enter.)

CHAPLAIN: I bring you a message from your son and the cook has come along because you made an impression on him.

COOK: Oh I've only come out for a breath of air.

COURAGE: If you behave yourself you can always get it here and if you don't, I'm ready for you. What does Eilif want? I have no money to spare.

CHAPLAIN: Perhaps I ought to go to the Paymaster.

COURAGE: He's not here now, nor anywhere else, and he's not his brother's paymaster. Eilif's not to outsmart him and lead him astray. *(She gives the Chaplain money from the pouch at her*

belt) Give him that. He ought to be ashamed for it's a sin to speculate in a mother's love.

COOK: It may not be so long before he's through with the regiment, first thing you know death will take him. If you don't indulge him a little now, you'll be sorry later. You women are always hard and then afterwards you're sorry. A glass of brandy offered for his sake would be acceptable but it's not forthcoming. First thing you know a man's under the sod and can't be dug up again.

CHAPLAIN: Never mind. It's a blessing, not a misfortune to fall in this war. And that's because it's a holy war. Not an ordinary war but an extraordinary war and what is done in the name of religion is pleasing to God.

COOK: That's right. In one sense it is a war because there's confiscation and stabbing and plundering, not forgetting a bit of rape, still it's different from all other wars because it's a holy war, that's clear enough. But you have to admit there *is* thirst as well.

CHAPLAIN: I've tried to control him but he says you bewitched him. He dreamed about you.

COOK: Only that I got a glass of brandy from your fair hand, no worse than that. And I've been punished enough for the Chaplain has made such jokes all the way that I'm still blushing.

COURAGE: And he in holy orders! I shall have to give you a drink or you'll be making me improper proposals just to pass the time.

CHAPLAIN: That is a temptation and we succumb to temptations. (*Turns to Katrin*) And who is this charming person?

COURAGE: She's not charming, she's an honest girl. (*The Cook and the Chaplain go behind the cart with Mother Courage. Katrin looks after them, picks up the hat, puts it on and preens herself in it, copying Yvette's walk. We hear the voices of Courage and the Chaplain discussing politics behind the wagon.*) The Poles in this country should have kept out of it. It's

true our King marched through with his men, horses and cannons, but these Poles got mixed up in it of their own accord instead of keeping the peace. They attacked the King just as he was crossing the country as peaceably as could be, so they are guilty of breaking the peace and their blood is on their own heads.

CHAPLAIN: Our king thinks of nothing but liberty. The Emperor has enslaved everyone, the Poles just as much as the Germans. It is the duty of the King to free them.

COOK: That's the way I see it, too. Your face didn't deceive me, your brandy is excellent, but as for the King, this freedom he's tried to bring to Germany has certainly made him trouble enough because he's proclaimed the salt tax in Sweden which cost the poor folks a pretty penny, they say, and then he's had to hang, draw and quarter the Germans for sticking to their slavery under the Emperor. Indeed if there had been nobody who needed freeing the King wouldn't have had any sport. First he only wanted to protect the Poles from evil influences, especially the Emperor but the appetite came with eating and now he's protected all of Germany. It didn't put up a bad fight, either. Our good King has had nothing but grief in return for his good intentions and expenses which he has to collect more taxes to cover. This creates bad blood but he doesn't let it discourage him but goes right on freeing anybody who'll give him half a chance. At first he found justification in the Word of God, that was all right. But later it began to be said he had a selfish reason and hoped for profit. Well he's always had a good conscience and that's the main thing.

COURAGE: I can see you're no Swede or you wouldn't talk that way about our heroic King.

CHAPLAIN: And what's more you eat his bread.

COOK: I don't eat his bread, I bake it.

COURAGE: He can never be conquered because his people love him.

CHAPLAIN: And you, as a Dutchman, ought to take a look at the flag that flies here before you air your opinions.

COURAGE: Here are good Protestants all. Prost! (*Sound of cannonading and shots. Drums. Courage, Cook and Chaplain rush out from behind the wagon, the last two with glasses in their hands. The Inspector and a Soldier come running to the cannon and try to push it away.*) What's the matter? You dolts, first let me get my wash off. (*She tries to save the wash.*)

INSPECTOR: An attack. The Catholics. We don't know if we'll pull through. (*To soldier*) Bring along the gun! (*Runs off.*)

COOK: Good God! I must get to the General. I'll be back in a day or two for another little chat with you. (*Runs off.*)

COURAGE: Wait, you dropped your pipe!

COOK (*From a distance*): Keep it for me. I need it.

COURAGE: Just when we'd made a little money!

CHAPLAIN: Well, I'll be off, too. But then if the enemy is so near, it might be dangerous. Blessed are the peaceful, especially in wartime. If I only had a cloak to throw over me.

COURAGE: I lend no cloak, even in a matter of life and death. Experience has taught me better.

CHAPLAIN: But I am in special danger because of my faith.

COURAGE (*Lends him cloak*): This is against my better judgment. Now be off.

CHAPLAIN: Thank you so much, it's very generous of you, but perhaps I should do better just to sit right here. If I'm seen running, it might excite suspicion and bring the enemy down on me.

COURAGE: Stay here then, you ass, you won't get paid for it. I give you fair warning, it may cost you your life.

SOLDIER (*Suddenly runs off*): You're my witness, I did my best.

COURAGE: I'll swear you did. (*Sees that her daughter is wearing Yvette's hat*) What are you doing with that whore's hat on? Will you kindly take that lid off? Have you gone clean crazy, what with the enemy upon us? (*Snatches the hat off*) Do you want them to find you and make a whore out of you? And

she's put on the shoes, this woman of Babylon. Off with those shoes! (*Trying to get them off*) Oh Lord, help me, Chaplain get the shoes off. I'll be back in a minute. (*She rushes back of the cart.*)

YVETTE (*Enters, powdering her face*): What's this they say? Are the Catholics coming? Where's my hat? Who's been stepping on it? I can't go around like this with the Catholics coming. How do I look? I haven't got a mirror. (*To Chaplain*) How do I look? Have I too much powder on?

CHAPLAIN: You're just right.

YVETTE: And where are my red shoes. (*She doesn't find them because Katrin hides her feet under her skirt*) I left them lying here. I'll have to get over to my tent barefoot. It'll hurt my feet but I have to do it. They'll find me barefoot. That would be a catastrophe.

(*She exits. Swisscheese comes running in carrying a little iron chest.*)

COURAGE (*Runs back carrying a handful of ashes*): I've got some ashes. (*To Swisscheese*) What are you lugging there?

SWISSCHEESE: The regimental treasury.

COURAGE: Throw it away! It's all been counted out.

SWISSCHEESE: I'm responsible for it. (*He goes behind the cart.*)

COURAGE (*To Chaplain*): Take your surplice off, Chaplain, or you'll be recognized even in that cloak. Now hold still. (*She rubs his face with ashes*) There, a little dirt and you're safe. This is called hiding your light under a bushel. A soldier, especially a Catholic with a pious face, and the whore is on the spot. They don't get a thing to eat for weeks and when they do get food by plundering, they tear into the women like tigers. Now perhaps we can manage. Let's take a look at you. Not bad. Now don't tremble, as long as you're rolled in filth nothing can happen to you. (*To Swisscheese*) What did you do with the chest?

SWISSCHEESE: I thought I'd put it in the cart.

COURAGE (*Furious*): What do you mean? In my cart? Such un-

godly stupidity! The minute my back is turned. You'd have all three of us hanged!

SWISSCHEESE: Then I'll put it somewhere else or run off with it.

COURAGE: Let it be. It's too late now.

CHAPLAIN (*Half out of the cloak*): In God's name the flag!

COURAGE (*Takes it down*): Now that's a good idea. I've had it five and twenty years; so long, I never know it's there.

(*The cannonading grows louder. Curtain is lowered to denote passage of time.*)

(*Early morning, three days later. The cannon is gone. Mother Courage, Kattrin, the Chaplain and Swisscheese are sitting sadly together over a meal.*)

SWISSCHEESE: This is the third day that I've been sitting here doing nothing and the Sergeant Major, who always keeps an eye on me, will start asking: where is that Swisscheese with the regimental treasury?

COURAGE: Be glad they haven't caught up with you yet.

CHAPLAIN: And what about me? I can't hold a prayer meeting here; if I did it would be the end of me. From a full heart the mouth runneth over, but woe is me if mine runs over.

COURAGE: That's how it is. One has religion and the other cash and I don't know which is more dangerous.

CHAPLAIN: We are all in the hand of God.

COURAGE: If I, too, didn't believe that we're so badly off that we're practically in the hand of God, I wouldn't be able to sleep at night. If it weren't for you, Swisscheese, we'd be all right. We can endure being captured. I told them I was against the Anti-Christ and the Swedes who have horns. In fact I've seen them. The left one is a little worn off. In the middle of the hearing I asked where I could buy candles. I knew all about it because Swisscheese's father was Catholic and was always making jokes. Though they didn't entirely believe me, they shut their eyes because they have no sutler for this regiment. It may be all for the best. We're captured, but only like the louse in the fur-piece. The defeat of the officers isn't always

the downfall of the common folk. The victory or the defeat of the mighty ones on top doesn't always coincide with what happens to the ones on the bottom; in fact, it never does. Not in the case of victory, because the ones on top devour everything that is conquered. And there are times when a defeat is really a gain for the ones on the bottom. Honor is lost but nothing more. I remember once in Livonia our General got such a beating from the enemy that in the confusion I got a white horse out of the baggage train and he drew my cart for months until we had a victory and everything was put in order. In general we can say that both victory and defeat are expensive for the common people. The *less politics* the better for us. (*To Swisscheese*) Eat!

SWISSCHEESE: I have no appetite. How will the Colonel pay the men?

COURAGE: During a retreat they don't get paid.

SWISSCHEESE: But they've earned it. They mustn't retreat without being paid. They mustn't move a step.

COURAGE: Swisscheese, your conscientiousness sometimes worries me. I brought you up to be honest, because you're not clever, but there are limits. The chaplain and I are going to look for meat now. No one is so sure to find meat as he, even in his sleep. I think he can tell a good piece because his mouth begins to water of its own accord. If they let me do business, well and good. A merchant doesn't ask you religion, he asks the price. And Protestant stockings keep you warm, too. As the beggar said, when they told him the Catholics would overturn everything in town and country, beggars, he said, are always needed. (*She goes to the cart.*)

CHAPLAIN: And she worries about the money. Up to now we haven't been found out. They think we belong to the wagon. How long will it last? (*To Katrin*) Don't give him all the best pieces. I'm hungrier. That's a strange kind of brotherly love.

SWISSCHEESE: I could throw the chest away.

CHAPLAIN: That's even more dangerous. Suppose they see you. They have informers. Early yesterday morning one of them popped out of the pit where I was going to ease myself. I was terrified and could hardly keep back a prayer for help. That would have betrayed me. I believe they can tell from the smell of the dung if you're a Protestant. The informer was a sort of little mad man with a bandage over one eye.

COURAGE (*Climbing out of the wagon with a basket*): Look what I've found, you shameless wretch! (*She holds up the red shoes triumphantly*) Yvette's red-heeled shoes. She cold-bloodedly filched them while you were telling her she was a charming person. (*She puts them in the basket*) I'll give them back. Stealing Yvette's shoes! She has to debase herself for the money, that I can understand. But you'd like to do it for fun. I've told you, you must wait for peace. No soldiers for you. Save that vanity of yours for peace.

CHAPLAIN: I don't find her vain.

COURAGE: She was always a little too much so. I like her best when she is silent as a stone in the river among the other stones. As long as people say: we never see the cripple, nothing can happen to her. (*To Swisscheese*) You leave that chest where it is, do you hear? And take care of your sister, she needs it. You'll drive me into my grave yet. I'd rather look after a bagful of fleas.

(*She exits with the Chaplain. Kattrin empties the plates.*)

SWISSCHEESE: Not many more days when you can sit in the sun in your shirtsleeves. (*Kattrin points to a tree*) Yes, the leaves have turned yellow already. (*Kattrin asks with gestures if he wants a drink*) I won't have a drink now. I'm busy reflecting. (*Kattrin goes behind the wagon*) I'll leave it in a molchill by the river, until I can take it away. Perhaps tomorrow night I can fetch it before dawn and take it to the regiment. They can't have retreated far in three days. The Colonel will be amazed. You have pleasantly surprised me, Swisscheese, he'll say. I entrust the treasury to you and you bring it back.

(As Kattrin comes from behind the cart with a glass, she runs into two men. One is a Colonel. The other tips his hat to her. He has a bandage over one eye.)

MAN WITH THE BANDAGE: God save you, Miss. Have you seen the paymaster of the Second Finnish Regiment?

(Kattrin, very much frightened, runs out front, spilling the brandy. The two men seat themselves out of sight when they notice Swisscheese sitting in front.)

SWISSCHEESE *(Roused from his reflections)*: You've upset half of it. Why are you behaving like an idiot? Did you hurt your eye? I don't understand you. I've got to go. I've decided it will be for the best. *(He gets up. She tries in every way to make him understand his danger. He waves her away.)* I wish I knew what you meant. You certainly mean well, poor creature, but you can't express yourself. What difference does it make if you spilled the brandy? I'll drink many another glass, so it's all the same. *(He fetches the chest out of the cart and puts it under his coat)* I'll be back directly. Now don't delay me, or I'll get angry. I know you mean well. If you could only talk.

(She still tries to hinder him but he kisses her and tears himself free. She is in despair and runs up and down uttering little cries. Courage and the Chaplain return. Kattrin rushes to her mother.)

COURAGE: Now what is it, what is it? You're quite beside yourself. Did anyone do anything to you? Where is Swisscheese? Here, take out the flag so our brandy will have a Catholic taste.

(She takes the Catholic banner from her basket and the Chaplain fastens it to a pole.)

CHAPLAIN *(Bitterly)*: Here are good Catholics all!

COURAGE: Tell it carefully, Kattrin. Your mother understands you. What? That bastard took the chest away? I'll box his ears, the underhanded wretch. Take your time and don't be silly. Use your hands. If you howl like a dog, what can I do and what will the Chaplain think? You'll make him shudder. There was a one-eyed man here? Chaplain, what does that

mean? Chaplain, they've seen him! (*She sits down, overcome with emotion.*)

CHAPLAIN: The one-eyed man is an informer. Have they caught Swisscheese? (*Katrin shakes her head and raises her shoulders*) We're done for!

(*Voices of the men bringing back Swisscheese are heard.*)

SWISSCHEESE: Let me go! I've nothing on me! Don't pull my arms out! I'm innocent.

COLONEL: This man belongs here. You know him?

COURAGE: We? How?

SWISSCHEESE: I don't know them. Who knows anybody. I've nothing to do with them. It may be you saw me sitting here. I bought lunch for ten hellers. There was too much salt in it.

COLONEL: Who are you people anyway?

COURAGE: Respectable folk. It's true he bought a meal here. It was too salty for him.

COLONEL: Are you pretending not to know him?

COURAGE: How should I know him? I don't know everyone. I ask no one his name or whether he's a heathen. As long as he pays, he's no heathen. Are you a heathen?

SWISSCHEESE: Not I.

CHAPLAIN: He sat here very respectably and didn't open his mouth except when he had to put something in it.

COLONEL: And who are you?

COURAGE: He's just my bartender and you are certainly thirsty. I'll fetch you a glass of brandy. You've certainly overheated yourself from running.

COLONEL: No brandy during active service. (*To Swisscheese*) You carried something off. You must have hidden it by the river. Your coat bulged way out when you left here.

COURAGE: Is he really the one you saw?

SWISSCHEESE: I think you mean someone else. I saw someone jump up with a bulge in his coat. But it wasn't me.

COURAGE: I, too, think there's a misunderstanding. Such things

can happen. I know human nature. I'm Courage; you've heard of me—everyone has. I tell you he looks honest.

COLONEL: We have been after the regimental treasury of the Second Finnish Regiment. We know from the way he looks that he had it in his custody. We have been hunting him for two days. You're the man.

SWISSCHEESE: I am not.

COLONEL: If you can't get out of it, you're done for. That you know. Where is it?

COURAGE (*Urgently*): If that's the case, he'd give it up if he had it. On the spot, he'd say: I have it, here it is, you're the stronger. He's not as stupid as all that. Talk, you stupid dog, the Colonel is giving you a chance.

SWISSCHEESE: But if I haven't got it?

COLONEL: Come along then. We'll get it out of you. (*They take him off.*)

COURAGE (*Calls after them*): He'll tell. He's not that stupid. And don't pull his arms out.

(*Curtain is lowered to denote passage of time.*)

(*The same evening. The Chaplain and Katrin are sitting together. Mother Courage enters, very much excited.*)

COURAGE: It's a matter of life and death. The Sergeant Major ought to let people talk to him. Only we daren't let it get out that he's our Swisscheese or we'll be implicated. Some think it's just a matter of bribery. But where will we get the money? Has Yvette been here? I met her on the way and she's already picked up a Colonel. Perhaps he'll buy my business for her.

CHAPLAIN: Does she really want to buy it?

COURAGE: How else can I get money for the Sergeant Major? (*Yvette Potier enters with a very old Colonel. She embraces Mother Courage.*)

YVETTE: Dear Courage, how nice to see each other so soon again. (*Whispers*) He didn't say no. (*Aloud*) This is a good friend of mine who advises me in business matters. I just heard by

chance that you wanted to sell your cart on account of business conditions. I'll think the matter over.

COURAGE: Pawn—not sell—and not in too much of a hurry. A wagon like this isn't easily come by in war time.

YVETTE (*Surprised*): Only pawned? I thought it was for sale. I don't know whether I'm interested. (*To Colonel*) What do you think?

COLONEL: Just as you do, darling.

COURAGE: I'll only pawn it.

YVETTE: I thought you had to have the money?

COURAGE (*Firmly*): I need money but I'd rather wear the soles off my feet looking for another offer than sell it outright. You want to know why? Because we live by this wagon. Still it's an opportunity for you, Yvette. You never know when you'll find another like it and a dear friend to advise you, eh?

YVETTE: Yes, my friend thinks I should make the most of it, but I don't know. If you're only pawning it. . . . You thought we'd buy it outright, didn't you?

COLONEL: Yes, that's what I thought.

COURAGE: Then you'll have to look for something that's for sale. Perhaps you'll find it, if you have time. If your friend stays with you for—shall we say—a week or two, you may be able to find something suitable.

YVETTE: Well, then we can go and look. I'd love to go around looking for a bargain. I'd love to go with you, Poldi. That would be fun. Wouldn't it? And what if it did take two weeks? (*To Courage*) If you did get the loan, when would you pay it back?

COURAGE: I'll pay it back in one or two weeks.

YVETTE: I can't make up my mind. Poldi, cheri, advise me. (*She takes him aside*) I know she has to sell. I'm not worried about that. And the Standard-bearer—you know the one I mean, the blond one—will be glad to lend me the money. He has a crush on me. He says I remind him of someone. What do you advise?

COLONEL: You take my advice about him, he's no good. He'll

wear out the wagon himself. Didn't I tell you I'd buy you something, my little rabbit?

YVETTE: I couldn't accept it from you, but of course if you think the Standard-bearer would wear it out . . . Poldi, I'll do as you say.

COLONEL: I think so, too.

YVETTE: Then you advise it?

COLONEL: I advise it.

YVETTE (*Goes back to Courage*): My friend advises me to do it. Write me a receipt, stating that the cart is mine, when the two weeks are up, with everything in it. I'll go through it now and the hundred guilders I'll bring you later. (*To Colonel*) Now you must go right back to your quarters and I'll be along soon. I must look through everything now to see that nothing gets taken out of the wagon. (*She kisses him, he exits. She climbs into the wagon.*) Some boots, but not many . . .

COURAGE: Yvette, there's not time now to inventory your wagon, if it is yours. You promised me you'd talk to the Sergeant Major about Swisscheese. There isn't a minute to lose. I hear he'll be court-martialed in an hour.

YVETTE: But I'll have to count the sheets first.

COURAGE (*Drags her out of the wagon*): Swisscheese's life is in question, you hyena. And not a word about who the offer comes from. Act as if he were your lover, in God's name, or we're all done for if they find out we're doing him a favor.

YVETTE: I've an appointment in the woods with the one-eyed man. He must be there already.

CHAPLAIN: And don't bid the whole two hundred right away, go up to a hundred and fifty, that's enough.

COURAGE: Is it your money? I humbly request you to keep out of it. You'll get your onion soup just the same. Now run and don't bargain, a man's life is at stake. (*Pushes Yvette away.*)

CHAPLAIN: I have no wish to mix in the affair. But how are you going to live? You have an unemployable daughter on your hands.

COURAGE: I'm counting on the regimental treasury. You owl of wisdom, at least they'll concede such expenses out of it.

CHAPLAIN: But will she set everything all right?

COURAGE: It's to her interest that I spend the two hundred for then she'll get the wagon. She's sharp enough. Who knows how long she'll have her Colonel on the string. Katrin, you polish the knives, use brimstone. And you, don't stand around like Jesus on a mountain, get a move on, wash the glasses. This evening we'll have at least fifty knights and then I'll hear: I'm not used to running. Oh my feet, by my Faith, I'll run no more. I think she'll get him off all right. Thank God they're corrupt. They're human beings, not tigers, and after money when they can get it. Corruption among men is like God's mercy in Heaven, we have to put our faith in it. I knew a knight among the Franks who was so crazy for money, even little sums from poor people, that he was considered a fine man all over, even as far as Saxony and that's saying a lot. They spoke of him like a saint for everyone could get his ear. He was harsh enough over the amount, no one could pretend he had nothing if he had something. He made no difference between a widow and a sack of pepper, they all had to give. I've heard people grow heated over corruption but there's such a thing as a light sentence and even the innocent have a chance to escape punishment.

YVETTE (*Comes back panting*): They're ready to do it for two hundred. Only it has to be quick. They don't give much time to these things. I ran as fast as I could go to my Colonel with the one-eyed man. Swisscheese admitted he had the chest, they put the thumbscrews on him. But he flung it into the river when he noticed they were behind him. So it's lost. Shall I run to my Colonel and fetch the money?

COURAGE: The chest is lost! How shall I get my two hundred back?

YVETTE: Oh, so you thought you'd get it out of the chest? Then I would have been nicely taken in. There's no hope of that, now.

If you want Swisscheese back, you'll have to pay. Perhaps I should let the whole thing drop so you can keep your wagon.

COURAGE: I hadn't counted on this. Don't press me, you'll get the cart. Seventeen years I've had it and now it's gone. I've got to get used to it, it's all happened so fast. What can I do? I can't give two hundred, you'll have to bargain. I have to have *some* cash left. Anybody can shove me into a pauper's grave but . . . (*Pointing at Kattrin*) She's twenty-five and can't get on alone. Go and tell them I'll give a hundred and twenty or it can't be done. Even at that I lose the wagon.

YVETTE: They won't do it. The one-eyed man is in such a hurry and so upset he's always looking over his shoulder. Hadn't you better give the two hundred?

COURAGE: (*In despair*): I can't give it. I've worked for thirty years. This girl is twenty-five and hasn't a husband. Neither have I. Don't press me. I know what I'm doing. Say a hundred and twenty or it can't be done.

YVETTE: You know best. (*Exits quickly.*)

(*Courage turns slowly, walks a few paces upstage, then turns back, looks at the Chaplain again, then at her daughter and sits down to help Kattrin polish the knives.*)

COURAGE: Don't break my glasses to pieces, they aren't ours any more. You look what you're doing or you'll cut yourself. Swisscheese will come back. I'll give the two hundred, if I have to. You'll get your brother back. With eighty guilders we could pack a hamper with wares and carry on. Why not try; at least? Flesh and blood are the same all over.

CHAPLAIN: God will see that all is for the best.

COURAGE: Rub them dry. That would mean an end to the war. And how can it end, I ask you? No one can tell me. (*Slowly*) The King and the Pope are mortal enemies, they have different religions. They must go on fighting until one is destroyed for until then neither can rest. But their fury is checked because there's the Emperor between them against whom they both have something. How can they tear each other to pieces when

the Emperor stands there, watching until they have worn each other out entirely so he can fall upon them both? So they are united against the Emperor to destroy him first so they can begin their tussle with each other. (*Kattrin suddenly runs behind the cart sobbing*) Someone once offered me five hundred for the wagon. I refused it. Eilif, wherever he is now, thought I had agreed and whined all night. And when I scolded him, went at me with his fists. She's coming back.

YVETTE (*Running*): They won't do it. The one-eyed man wanted to leave because it wasn't worth his while. He said he expected to hear the drums any minute announcing the verdict. I offered a hundred and fifty. He didn't even shrug his shoulders. I had the greatest trouble to keep him there while I came to talk with you again.

COURAGE: Tell him I'll give two hundred. Run! (*She runs off. Mother Courage sits silent. The Chaplain has begun to polish glasses.*) I'm afraid I bargained too long.

(*From a distance the sound of drums. The Chaplain gets up and stumbles to the back of the scene. Mother Courage sits still. It gets darker. The drums stop. It seems to grow lighter again. Mother Courage sits without moving.*)

YVETTE (*Comes back very pale*): You heard, didn't you? It's all over. They fired eleven bullets. It was very quick. But I hear rumors that they don't believe the chest is really in the river. They have a notion that it's here. Especially since you have some connection with him. I think they are going to bring him here in hopes you will betray yourself when you see him. I thought I had better warn you that you must not recognize him or you'll all be implicated. Don't be upset! They're coming right away, I couldn't beat about the bush. Shall I take Kattrin away? (*Mother Courage shakes her head*) Does she know? Perhaps she didn't hear the drums or didn't understand.

COURAGE: She knows. Fetch her.

(*Yvette gets Kattrin who goes to her mother and stands near her.*)

Mother Courage takes her hand. Out of the clearing in the bushes, two porters carry a bier. Something lies under a blanket. The Sergeant Major walks beside it. They set down the bier.)

SERGEANT: Here is someone who's name we don't know. It should be recorded so that everything can be done according to regulations. So he ate a meal with you. Look at him and see if you know him. *(He raises the blanket)* Do you know him? *(Mother Courage shakes her head)* Do you mean to say you had never seen him before he bought that meal from you? *(Courage nods)* Lift him up. Take him to the carrion pit. He has no one here who knows him. *(The bier is borne away and Mother Courage and Katrin look after it.)*

SCENE 4

Mother Courage sings the Song of the great Compromise. In front of an officer's tent. Mother Courage is sitting, waiting. A Clerk looks out of the tent.

COURAGE: I'm here to lodge a complaint with the Captain of the Cavalry. I've been molested.

CLERK: I know you. You had a Protestant paymaster with you. He'd hidden himself away. You'd better not make any complaint.

COURAGE: I'm still lodging a complaint. I am innocent and if I let it go it will look as if I had a bad conscience. They cut everything in my wagon to pieces with sabers and demanded a five taler fine for no reason at all.

CLERK: I advise you for your own good to keep your face shut. We haven't many sutlers and we're letting you do business. Especially if you have a bad conscience and have to pay a fine now and then.

COURAGE: I lodge a complaint.

CLERK: As you like. Then wait until the Captain of the Cavalry has time. *(Goes back into the tent.)*

YOUNG SOLDIER *(Comes in ranting)*: Bouque la Madonne!

Where is that God-damned hound of a Captain of the Cavalry. He filched my tip and he's drinking it up with his whores. Away with him!

OLD SOLDIER (*Running after him*): Hold your tongue. You'll get the stocks.

YOUNG SOLDIER: Come out, you thief! I'll slice you to cutlets. To filch my tip after I swam in the river, the only one in the whole division, so I can't buy a beer. I won't stand for it! Come out and I'll make mincemeat out of you!

OLD SOLDIER: Joseph and Mary, he's bent on his own destruction.

COURAGE: Didn't they give him his tip?

YOUNG SOLDIER: Let me go. I'll knock you down, too. This is a score that has to be settled.

OLD SOLDIER: He saved the Colonel's horse and got no tip. He's still young and hasn't been around long enough.

COURAGE: Let him go. He's not a dog you have to chain up. It's very sensible to want a tip. Why doesn't that fellow show himself?

YOUNG SOLDIER: Because he's sopping it up inside. It's no skin off your nose. But I've done a special favor and I want my tip.

COURAGE: Young man, don't bellow at me. I have my own troubles and anyway you should give your voice a rest, you'll need it when the Captain of the Cavalry comes. You won't be able to speak by the time he comes and he can't put you in the stocks unless you actually do something. People who shout so, don't do it for long. Half an hour later you can sing them to sleep, they're so exhausted.

YOUNG SOLDIER: I'm not exhausted and who's talking about sleep? I'm hungry. They make bread out of acorns and hempseed and little enough of that. He's whoring away with my tip and I'm hungry. Away with him!

COURAGE: I understand, you're hungry. Last year your general ordered you off the street and straight through the fields and so the corn was trampled down. I could have gotten ten guilders for boots if anyone had ten guilders and I the boots.

He never thought he'd be in this neighborhood this year but here he is and there's plenty of hunger. I can see why you're angry.

YOUNG SOLDIER: I won't endure it, no matter what you say, I won't stand for injustice.

COURAGE: You're right but how long will you feel that way? How long will you refuse to endure injustice? An hour or two. Look here, you haven't asked yourself what it's like to be in the stocks although that's the point of the whole affair. When you do, you'll suddenly endure injustice.

YOUNG SOLDIER: I don't know why I'm listening to you. Bouque la Madonne, where's the Captain of the Cavalry?

COURAGE: You're listening to me because you understand me well enough. Your anger is burnt out, there wasn't enough of it. And where will you get more?

YOUNG SOLDIER: Are you trying to say it isn't reasonable of me to want a tip?

COURAGE: On the contrary. I'm only saying you're not angry enough. And so you can't do anything about it. A pity, but that's the way it is. If you were really angry, I might urge you on. I might advise you to cut the dog to pieces. But if you don't do it, because you've already got your tail between your legs, what then? I'm still here and the Captain of the Cavalry lets me have it.

OLD SOLDIER: You're quite right. He's just having a brainstorm.

YOUNG SOLDIER: We'll see whether I cut him up or not. (*Draws his sword*) When he comes, I'll chop him down.

COURAGE: Don't make me cross, Young Man, or I'll give you no more advice at all but wait and see what you do. In the first place, why did you swim after the Colonel's horse? That's a bad sign to begin with.

CLERK (*Looks out*): The Captain of the Cavalry can't be seen. Sit down! (*Young Soldier sits down perplexed.*)

COURAGE: And he's already sitting down. See, what did I tell you, you're already sitting down. Yes, they know us through

and through. Sit down—and right away we sit. You can't make a disturbance when you're sitting. Don't stand up the way you did just now, no, don't stand up again. And don't be ashamed in front of me. I'm not a bit better. Just take my example. You can't butt your head against a stone wall either. I can see that. And I'm the same way. And why? Because we've all sold out our courage. Let me tell you a story. (*She sings*)

SONG OF THE GREAT COMPROMISE

Once I thought I amounted to a lot,
In the springtime of life, when I was young.

Not like every lovable cottager's daughter, me with
my looks and talent and yearning for higher things.
And I ordered my soup with no hair in the pot
And I threw it on the floor if it burnt my tongue.

Then, upon the roof a starling flew,
Whistling: wait a year or two.
And you're marching with the band
Your instrument in your hand,
Blowing your own little tune.
And then, pretty soon
It's: take the bread and skip the roses,
Man proposes, God disposes—
Don't cry for the moon.

And before that year was really past
They had me like this,
(*She indicates thumbs down*)

They had so thoroughly cured me,
Two children on my hands and what
with the price of bread and all the other
things you need!

That when they were through with me at last,
I was tickled to death if anyone endured me.

You have to take people as they are,
one hand washes the other, you can't butt
your head against a stone wall.

Then, upon the roof a starling flew
Whistling: no more time for you.
For they're marching with the band
Their instruments in their hands,
Each blowing his own little tune.
And then pretty soon
It's: take the bread and skip the roses,
Man proposes, God disposes—
Don't cry for the moon.

(The two soldiers pick up the tune and sing as though learning it)

No star was high enough to hitch their wagons to
For all those folk I saw storming heaven's gate.

Cleverness does it, where there's a will there's
a way, we're sure to hit the jackpot.

But after moving mountains with a great to do,
They were much too weak to lift a feather's weight.

You must cut your coat according to your cloth.

(The Soldiers sing with her)

And upon the roof a starling flew
Whistling: wait a year or two.
And they're marching with the band
Their instruments in their hands,
Each blowing his own little tune.
And pretty soon—

It's: Take the bread and skip the roses,
Man proposes, God disposes—
Don't cry for the moon.

(To the young soldier)

And that's why I think you should stand up with a naked
sword if you really mean it, if your anger is sufficient, but if
your anger is burnt out, then you'd better go away.

BRECHT

YOUNG SOLDIER: Oh kiss my tail! (*He stalks out followed by the Old Soldier.*)

CLERK (*Sticks his head out again*): The Captain of the Cavalry is here. Now you can lodge your complaint.

COURAGE: I've thought better of it. I lodge no complaint. (*She exits.*)

CURTAIN

ACT TWO

SCENE I

Two years have gone by. The war covers even more territory. In its restless travels, Mother Courage's little cart crosses Poland, Moravia, Bavaria, Italy, and again Bavaria. 1631. Tilly's victory at Leipsic costs Mother Courage four officers' shirts.

It is night. The sky is red from burning huts. Courage's cart is standing in a destroyed village. From a distance faint military music. Two Soldiers at the bartable are being served by Katrin and Mother Courage. One has a woman's fur coat thrown around him.

COURAGE: What's this? You can't pay? No money, no schnapps. They play marches but they don't pay their men.

SOLDIER (*Threateningly*): I'll have a glass of schnapps. I was too late for the plundering. The city was only laid open to pillage for an hour. Our General says he isn't inhuman. But I hear tell the city paid him off.

CHAPLAIN (*Stumbles up*): There's still something in the courtyard. The farmer's family. Some one help me. I need linen. (*A Soldier goes to him.*)

COURAGE: I haven't any. I sold all my bandages to the regiment. I won't tear up my officers' shirts for you.

CHAPLAIN (*Calls back*): I need linens, I tell you.

COURAGE (*Pulls shirts out of her wagon*): I'll give nothing. They won't pay. Why? Because they have nothing.

CHAPLAIN (*To a Woman he has dragged out of the farmyard*): Why did you stay in the line of fire?

WOMAN (*Weakly*): Farmyard . . .

COURAGE: Take this and go away. My beautiful shirts. Tomorrow when the officers come, I'll have nothing for them. (*She throws out a shirt which Katrin takes to the farmer's wife*) Why am I giving things away? I didn't start this war.

FIRST SOLDIER (*Drinking*): Those are Protestants. Why do they have to be Protestants?

COURAGE: I spit on your religion. Their farmyard is ruined.

SECOND SOLDIER: They aren't Protestants at all. They're Catholics themselves.

FIRST SOLDIER: Well, the bullets can't pick and choose.

FARMER (*As the Chaplain brings him out*): My arm is broken. (*There is the heartbreaking sound of a Child's cry in the empty house.*)

CHAPLAIN (*To Farmer's wife*): Lie still.

COURAGE: Fetch out the child. (*Katrin runs to do so. Courage tears another shirt.*) This piece is worth half a guilder. I'm ruined. Don't move them while you're dressing them. There may be a broken back. (*To Katrin who has gotten hold of a nursing Baby. She runs about rocking it.*) Have you got another baby to play with? Give it to its mother this minute or I'll have an hour's tussle with you before I get it away from you. Don't you hear me? (*Katrin pays no attention*) I have nothing but losses from your victory. Now that's got to do. Don't fool around with any more bandages, Chaplain, I humbly beg of you.

CHAPLAIN: I need more. The blood's coming through.

COURAGE (*Looking at Katrin*): There she sits and she's happy in all this misery but that will be over soon, too. The farmer's wife will come to her senses directly. (*As Katrin finally obeys*

BRECHT

and gives the baby to its mother, she tears up another shirt) I'll give nothing more. Better go and tell them to stop their music. From what we have here I can see it's a victory. Have a glass of schnapps, Chaplain, don't refuse, I have enough troubles. *(She has to jump down from the wagon to drag her Daughter away from the first Soldier who is now drunk)* You animal, you want another kind of victory, do you? *(He tries to walk off without paying)* Wait, you don't get away from me without paying. *(To Farmer)* Everything is being done for your child. *(Pointing to Farmer's wife)* Put something under her. *(To the first Soldier)* Then leave me your cloak. It's more or less stolen anyway. *(First Soldier goes staggering away. Courage tears up more shirts.)*

CHAPLAIN: There's still another in there.

COURAGE: Don't worry. I'm going to tear up every shirt.

SCENE 2

Before the city of Ingolstadt in Bavaria. Mother Courage is present at the funeral of the Emperor's general Tilly who fell in battle. There is talk of heroism in battle and the length of the war. The Chaplain complains that his talents are being wasted and dumb Kattrin gets her red shoes.

The year is 1632. Interior of a sutler's tent, bar at the back. It is raining. In the distance, drums. The Chaplain and a regimental Clerk are playing chess. Mother Courage and her daughter are taking an inventory.

CHAPLAIN: Now the funeral procession is just starting out.

COURAGE: Too bad for the General—22 pairs of socks—that he had to fall in battle, I mean, it was bad luck. There was a mist in the fields, that's what was to blame. Here the General orders another regiment to go to the front and fight to the last man, starts to ride to the rear, goes in the wrong direction, to the front instead and gets wiped out by a bullet in the middle of

the fight—only four lanterns left. (*A whistle in the rear. She goes to the bar.*) It's a pity you, too, are kept back from the funeral of your dead general. (*She pours a drink.*)

CLERK: They shouldn't have paid them off before the funeral was over. They got an advance payment from the General's will because he left them something.

CHAPLAIN (*To Clerk*): Don't you have to go?

CLERK: I stayed away on account of the rain.

COURAGE: You've got a different excuse, the rain might spoil your uniform. The truth is, they naturally wanted to ring the bells at the burial but it turned out that the church was shot away at his orders so the poor general won't hear any bells when they let him down. And so they intend to fire the cannon three times and so it won't seem too sober, seventeen volleys as well.

VOICE: Bartender, a brandy.

COURAGE: Money, first. No, don't come in here, into my tent with your filthy boots. You can drink it outside. Rain here and rain there. (*To the clerk*) I only let the charge accounts inside. I hear the General had trouble toward the last. They didn't want to pay for the war any more. Nothing would do but cutting expenses. It must have spoiled his pleasure in the war—only two chests of sugar—I'm always sorry for a General or a King like that. He probably thought he was doing something special that folks would talk about in future times and give him a statue for. For example, he goes at the Lutherans hammer and tongs for the glory of God. Don't interrupt me because you're a Lutheran; Jesus, no. The Regiment Clerk won't betray us—he'll get another glass of schnapps. What was I saying? Yes, that they really ought to be pious and give to the limit: it's a high aim for a Catholic who doesn't know any better. I mean the General works himself to death and everything goes wrong on account of the common people who can't get the hang of such an elevated purpose and it's just out of selfishness and dislike of taxes—Lord love you, there are

worms in the onions—no, we don't deserve such heroes. They have only crosses to bear, all on account of us. They're always so far above the common herd and want to conquer the world and when they look around for people to do it for them, they don't find any. All they find are folks who think of their own skins and have nothing in their heads but how to keep body and soul together with a little sociability now and then and a glass of beer at noon—now really, where has the chest with the bottles got to?—I ask you how can such a General or Emperor carry out long range plans with such people? The best plans go wrong on account of the poor-spiritness of those who have to carry them out, since the Emperor can do nothing by himself and has to depend on a little support from his soldiers and people just as they stand. And if they don't respond, there's nothing to be done. Then the heroes wear themselves out and nothing comes of it; nothing to put in the history books for everyone to look at. That's a tragedy—only seven sacks of sugar? Katrin, I don't understand it!

CHAPLAIN: I agree with you, Courage; as far as the soldiers are concerned they do their share. I'd have enough confidence in those fellows sopping up their brandy in the rain to carry on one war after another for a hundred years—or even two wars at once—if I had to. And I'm no educated General.

COURAGE: Then do you think the war is over?

CHAPLAIN: On account of the Commander-in-Chief? Don't be childish. You can find a dozen of them—there are always plenty of heroes.

COURAGE: Well, I didn't ask you that just to tease you but because I'm wondering whether I should buy in a supply of whatever is cheap now. If the war is over, I'd have to throw it away.

CHAPLAIN: I can see why you're serious about it. There are always people going around saying: the war is nearly over. I say there's no reason why the war should end. Of course there can be a little pause. War has to have a breathing spell; yes, it

can run into a snag so to speak and cease to make progress. For indeed nothing is certain and nothing on earth is perfect. A perfect war needing nothing to complete it will probably never exist. A war can come to grief suddenly through unforeseen circumstances. Man can not think of everything. Some little oversight and it lands you in the ditch. And then you have to get your war out of the mud. But the Emperor and the King and the Pope will come to its aid in time of need. On the whole, there's no serious danger. The war is due for a long life.

SOLDIER (*Sings at the bar*):

Quick host, come pour your booze,
A knight can't pick and choose,
When he's off to fight for the Kaiser.

A double order, today's a holiday.

COURAGE: If I could believe you . . .

CHAPLAIN: Think it over yourself. What is there to stop the war?

SOLDIER: Come girl, no time to lose,
A knight can't pick and choose
When he rides to the south for the Kaiser.

CLERK (*Suddenly*): And peace, what comes after that? I'm from Bohemia and I'd like to get home once in a while.

CHAPLAIN: You would, would you? Ah yes, peace, indeed. What happens to the holes when you eat the cheese?

SOLDIER: Up lad, you can refuse,
A knight can't pick and choose
When he joins up to fight for the Kaiser.
Pray priest, no time to lose,
A knight can't pick and choose
And he's got to die for his Kaiser.

CLERK: In the long run you can't live without peace.

CHAPLAIN: I should say there is peace in wartime, too. It has its moments of peace. War satisfies your necessities, for instance, even the peaceful ones; it has to or it couldn't go on. You can ease yourself just as well in war as in peacetime and you get a beer between one battle and another and you can take a nap

by leaning your head on your arm during an advance—that you can even do in the gutter. And when it rains you can play cards; which you can never do in peacetime when there are fields to be plowed. And after a victory there are all sorts of possibilities. You may get a leg shot off and first you make a great uproar about it, as though it were something, but then you quiet down or get a glass of schnapps and in the end you hop around and the war is no worse than it was before. And what's to stop you from getting children in the midst of the slaughter, behind some barn or other, so then you don't have to stick out the duration because the war has your offspring and can get along with him. No, war always finds a solution, one way or another.

(Kattrin has been listening and stares at the Chaplain.)

COURAGE: Then I'll buy some wares. I'm depending on you.

(Kattrin suddenly throws down a basket with bottles and runs out) Kattrin! Lord Jesus, she was waiting for peace! I promised her she would have a husband as soon as we had peace.

(She runs after her.)

CLERK *(Rising)*: I've won while you were talking. Pay up.

COURAGE *(Comes back with Kattrin)*: Be reasonable. It'll go on a little longer and we'll make a little more money and then peace will be all the better. You go to town, it won't take you ten minutes, and fetch the valuable stuff from the Golden Lion. The rest we'll take later with the cart. We've been through everything now and the regimental clerk will go with you. Practically everyone is at the funeral so nothing can happen to you.

(Kattrin puts handkerchief over her head and goes with the clerk.)

CHAPLAIN: The way you manage your affairs and always manage to pull through fills me with admiration. I understand why they call you Courage.

COURAGE: Poor people need courage. For without it they're lost. Just getting up early is something to their credit. Or plowing a

field in wartime. They have to be each other's executioners and fight each other and after that it takes courage to look each other in the face. And to bring children into the world takes courage because they have no future. Enduring an Emperor and a Pope certainly indicates a strange kind of courage for it costs them their lives. (*She sits down, and draws out a little pipe*) You can cut a little kindling.

CHAPLAIN (*Takes off his jacket and prepares to cut wood*): After all, I'm a saver of souls, not a woodcutter.

COURAGE: But I have no soul. On the other hand, I need firewood.

CHAPLAIN: What's that pipestump you've got there?

COURAGE: Just a pipe.

CHAPLAIN: No, not just a pipe, but a very special one.

COURAGE: Indeed?

CHAPLAIN: That's the pipe that belonged to the cook in Oxenstjern's Regiment.

COURAGE: If you know it, why do you ask so hypocritically?

CHAPLAIN: Because I wanted to know if you were aware that you were smoking it. It might be that you just fished about in your possessions and the pipe came into your hand and you picked it up out of pure absentmindedness.

COURAGE: And why couldn't it be that way?

CHAPLAIN: Courage, I warn you. It is my duty. You will probably never see that man again and it's no loss but rather your good luck. He made no particular impression on me. Quite the contrary.

COURAGE: Indeed. He was a nice fellow.

CHAPLAIN: Well! So that's what you call a nice fellow? I don't. I am far from wishing him any misfortune but I can't call him nice. An ex-Don Juan, a dandy. Take a look at the pipe and see if you don't believe me. You'll have to admit it betrays his character in every way.

COURAGE: I see nothing. It's had use.

CHAPLAIN: It's half bitten through. A violent man. That's the

pipestump of a heedless violent man. You can see it if you haven't lost all judgment.

COURAGE: Don't cut my chopping block in two.

CHAPLAIN: I told you I wasn't an experienced woodcutter. I studied the healing of souls. This physical work is a misuse of my talents and gifts. My God-given talent is being wasted. It's a sin. You never heard me preach. I can so hearten a regiment with a sermon that they have no more fear of the enemy than of a herd of sheep. They're ready to toss away their lives like old shoes at the thought of victory. For this, God has lent me the gift of eloquence. I can preach you deaf, dumb and blind.

COURAGE: I certainly don't want to be deaf, dumb and blind. What should I do then?

CHAPLAIN: Courage, it's often occurred to me that you might have a warm heart for all your prosaic talk. You are a human being and a human being needs a certain kind of warmth.

COURAGE: We can best warm the tent if we have enough firewood.

CHAPLAIN: Don't change the subject. Really, Courage, sometimes I ask myself how it would be if our relationship should turn out to be a little closer. I mean, since the cyclone of war has whirled us together so strangely.

COURAGE: I think it is close enough. I cook your food and you keep busy with such things as cutting firewood and wiping glasses.

CHAPLAIN (*Approaches her*): You know what I mean by closer. Food and woodchopping and such bare necessities are not a relationship. Let your heart speak out and don't harden it against me.

COURAGE: Don't stand over me with a hatchet. That's much too close a relationship for me.

CHAPLAIN: Don't make a joke of it. I'm a serious man and I've carefully considered what I say.

COURAGE: Chaplain, don't be a fool. Don't butt your head against a stone wall. I find you sympathetic and I don't want to have

to give you a piece of my mind. And there's that pipe, too, that has something to do with it. But that is only a detail. The important thing to me is to get through the war with my children with the aid of my cart. I've lost one child already. Right this minute I'm taking a risk in buying, with the General dead and everybody talking peace. You must realize my mind is on other things. What will happen to you, if I should be ruined? You see, you don't know. Cut the firewood, at least we'll be warm at night and that's a lot in times like these. (*She gets up. Katrin enters, breathless, with a cut over her eye. She is dragging all sorts of things, packages, leather straps, a drum, etc.*) What's happened? Were you attacked? In a back alley? She's been attacked in a back alley! I should never have let her go! Throw that stuff away! It's not bad, the wound is only a flesh wound. I'll dress it and it will be healed in a week. They are worse than animals. (*She dresses the wound*) Be quiet. Didn't the clerk come back with you? That's because you're an honest girl. They don't bother their heads about you. The wound isn't deep. There won't be a scar. There, now it's dressed. Be still, I've got something for you. I've been keeping it secretly. You shall see. (*She drags the red shoes that belonged to Yvette out of a bag*) Well, what do you think of that? You always wanted them. Everything is destroyed and there is nothing you can do about it. The pretty ones have the worst fate of all. They get knocked about until there's nothing left of them. Only an ugly girl has a chance to live. I've seen girls like her with pretty faces and it wasn't long before it would make the flesh of a wolf creep to look at them. They couldn't walk behind a tree on the avenue without something to fear. They have a dreadful life. It's the same with trees, too, the straight, tall ones are cut down for rafters and the crooked ones live happily. So this, too, is really a blessing in disguise. The shoes are still in fine condition. I kept them polished. (*Katrin puts on her new shoes and goes to work. She is quiet again.*)

CHAPLAIN (*As soon as she is outside*): Let's hope her face isn't disfigured.

COURAGE: There'll be a scar. Now she can't wait for peace.

CHAPLAIN: And she let no one take the goods from her!

COURAGE: If I knew what went on inside of her head! Once she stayed out all night. Only once in all these years. . . . Afterwards she went around as before and only worked the harder. I could never get what happened out of her. For a while I worried about it. (*She picks up the goods and sorts them angrily*) That's war for you. Fine things you get out of it.

(*Sound of cannon shots.*)

CHAPLAIN: Now they're burying the General. This is a historic moment.

COURAGE: It's a historic moment to me when my daughter gets hit over the head. They have to make war just for the fame and the fun they get out of it. Now she's half spoiled, she'll never get a husband. And she so crazy about children, at that. And she's dumb on account of the war. When she was little a soldier stuck something in her mouth. I'll never see Swisscheese again and where Eilif is, God knows. Curse war, I say.

INTERSCENE BEFORE THE CURTAIN

(*A road. Chaplain, Courage and Kattrin are pulling the covered cart. It is dirty and worn but new wares are hanging on it.*)

COURAGE (*Sings*): So many seek, so many have
 What half the world can never gain.
 I've seen a man dig his own grave
 Just for shelter from the rain.
 And many a man goes rushing by
 Hell bent for any spot to lie in.
 Once he lies down, he'll wonder why
 He ran to find a bed to die in.

(*She plays the refrain AND SPRING RETURNS, on the harmonica.*)

BRECHT

SCENE 3

In the same year Gustavus Adolphus, the King of Sweden, fell in the battle of Lutzen. The tiding of peace runs through the distressed country. Peace threatens Mother Courage with ruin. The Cook's amorous fickleness is revealed by the arrival of an old acquaintance who has made a fortune in the war. Courage's brave son performs one act of heroism too many and comes to a shameful end, but new stirrings of war compassionately shield her from the blow.

A camp. Summer morning. In front of the cart stand an old man and his son. They are manual laborers. The son drags a huge sack with bedclothes in it.

COURAGE (*Calls out of the cart*): Do you have to come here at the crack of dawn?

YOUNG MAN: It took us the whole night to tramp the twenty miles to get here and we have to go back today.

COURAGE: What can I do with featherbeds? Those that don't have them can't buy. Go to the city.

YOUNG MAN: We'd rather wait until you have a look at it. (*They sit down.*)

OLD MAN: There's nothing doing. We might as well go home.

YOUNG MAN: And then they'll sign away the roof over our heads for taxes.

COURAGE: Better not wait. The city folks haven't been buying from me for a long time. I get only the officers' business. And they get their featherbeds from the city.

YOUNG MAN: Perhaps she'll give three guilders if you throw in the bracelet. (*Bells begin to ring*) Listen, father.

VOICES: Peace!

The King of Sweden is dead!

(*Courage, with her hair down, sticks her head out of the cart.*)

COURAGE: What are those bells for in the middle of the week?

CHAPLAIN (*Comes running out of a nearby tent*): What's that they're yelling? Is it peace?

COURAGE: Don't tell me peace has broken out just when I've bought new stock.

CHAPLAIN (*Calling out at the rear*): It is really peace?

VOICES: Three weeks ago.

We didn't get the news.

CHAPLAIN (*To Courage*): Why else would they ring the bells?

VOICES: A great crowd of Lutherans came into the city with carts. They brought the news.

YOUNG MAN: Father, it's peace. What's the matter, Father?

(*The old man has sunk down, overcome.*)

COURAGE (*Calling out of the wagon*): Joseph and Mary! Katrin, peace! Put on your Sunday clothes! We'll go to church! I'll be dressed in a minute. I wonder if it's true!

YOUNG MAN: These people say it's true, too. They've made peace. Can you stand up? (*Old man gets up, bewildered*) I'll get the harness shop going again. I promise you. Everything will be all right. Mother will get her bed back. Can you walk? (*To Chaplain*) He's been taken badly. It's the news. He didn't believe we'd ever have peace again. But Mother always said we would. We'll go right home. (*Both exit.*)

COURAGE (*From the cart*): Give him a brandy.

CHAPLAIN: They're already gone.

COURAGE: What's going on in camp?

CHAPLAIN: They're all running together in a crowd. I'll go over. Shouldn't I put on my surplice?

COURAGE: Just go and hear the news before you announce yourself as the Anti-Christ. I'm glad about peace even if I am ruined. At least I've brought two of my children through the war.

CHAPLAIN: And who's this coming down the camp alley? If it isn't the General's Cook!

COOK (*Enters carrying a bundle, looking a little bedraggled*): Do my eyes deceive me! The Chaplain! (*They embrace.*)

CHAPLAIN: Courage, a visitor!

(*She climbs out dressed in her Sunday clothes.*)

COOK: I promised I'd come for a little chat as soon as I had time.

I haven't forgotten your brandy.

COURAGE: Lord Jesus, the General's Cook! After all these years!

Where's Eilif, where's my oldest boy?

COOK: Isn't he here yet? He started before me and was on his way to see you.

CHAPLAIN: Wait a minute. I'll put on my surplice. (*Goes into tent.*)

COURAGE: You shall have a glass of brandy. He might be here any minute. (*Calls into the wagon*) Kattrin, Eilif's coming! Fetch a glass of brandy for the Cook. Kattrin! (*Kattrin doesn't appear*) Put a kerchief over your hair and get ready. The Cook is no stranger. (*Gets the brandy herself*) She won't come out. Peace is nothing to her any more. It was too long a wait. They hit her over the head. You can hardly see anything now but she thinks people stare at her.

COOK: That's war for you. (*He and Courage sit.*)

COURAGE: Cook, you find me in a spell of bad luck. I'm ruined.

COOK: How's that? That's a shame.

COURAGE: Peace plays the devil with me. On the advice of the Chaplain I just now bought new stock. Now it's all over and my wares are a white elephant.

COOK: How could you listen to the Chaplain. If I had had time and the Catholics hadn't come so quickly, I'd have warned you against him. He's a rascal. So he's still in high favor with you?

COURAGE: He washes dishes for me and helps serve.

COOK: He—a waiter? He's probably told you a couple of his jokes, too. The kind I know so well. He's got a thoroughly unhealthy attitude toward women. I used to have some influence over him at one time. He's not a steady man.

COURAGE: But you're steady?

COOK: Steady, if nothing else. Prost!

COURAGE: Steadiness isn't anything. God be thanked; I've only

had one who was steady. He sold the children's blankets at the beginning of winter so I shouldn't have to work so hard, and he thought my harmonica was ungodly. Steadiness is no recommendation.

COOK: Always spoiling for a fight, but I honor you for it.

COURAGE: Now don't tell me you dreamed about me spoiling for a fight.

COOK: Ah me, here we sit with the bells tolling for peace and you pouring out brandy as only you can do it. It's really splendid.

COURAGE: I haven't any use for the bells of peace just now. I don't know who's going to pay the bill that's in arrears; and then where am I with my famous brandy? Did you get paid off?

COOK (*Stammering*): Not exactly. That's why we got mustered out. And that being the case, I thought to myself, where shall I find a place to stay. For the time being I decided to visit friends. And so here I sit beside you.

COURAGE: Which means you haven't got a cent.

COOK: It's about time they put an end to all that noise. What good is it? You know that's what impressed me most deeply at our first meeting, so dramatically interrupted. You look danger in the face and think nothing of it. I'm the same.

COURAGE: So you think you might be dangerous to me?

COOK: I've been taking stock of myself all along.

COURAGE: Indeed.

COOK: I'd like very much to get into some sort of business. I've no wish to be a cook. I'd have to patch something together out of tree-roots and old leather and then you'd throw the soup in my face. I was once kicked in the kidneys because I hadn't served any meat. I feel it yet. Being a cook today is a dog's life. It's better to be a soldier but then, we've got peace now. (*Chaplain enters in his surplice*) We'll talk it over later.

CHAPLAIN: It's still in good condition, only a couple of moth-holes in it.

COOK: I don't know why you take all that trouble. You won't

get your old position back. How can you inspire anyone to earn his pay when there isn't any pay? I've still another bone to pick with you for advising this lady to overstock under the impression that the war would go on forever.

CHAPLAIN (*Heated*): I should like to know what that's got to do with you?

COOK: It's an unscrupulous thing to do, that's what. How did you dare to interfere in someone's business with your uncalled for advice?

CHAPLAIN: Who interfered? (*To Courage*) I never knew you were so very friendly with this gentleman or accountable to him.

COURAGE: Don't get excited. The Cook is only giving his private opinion. And you can't deny that your war turned out to be a blank.

CHAPLAIN: Don't sin against peace, you scavenger of the battlefield!

COURAGE: What's that you called me?

COOK: If you slander my friend, you'll have to reckon with me.

CHAPLAIN: I have nothing to say to you. Your purpose is only too transparent. (*To Courage*) But when I see you treat peace like a filthy handkerchief, holding it between thumb and forefinger, I am humanly aroused. I see you don't want peace but war to make profits from. Don't forget the old adage: who sups with the devil must have a long spoon.

COURAGE: "I warn you," one fox said to the other that was caught in a trap. "Don't stay there, you may get into serious trouble." I don't care for war and war cares very little for me. I decline to be called a scavenger. You and I are two different sorts of people.

CHAPLAIN: Then why do you complain about peace when everyone else is heaving a sigh of relief. And just on account of a couple of old rags in your cart.

COURAGE: My wares aren't rags but something I live from and so did you a little while ago.

CHAPLAIN: And you live from war, too, hah!

COURAGE: I don't make it. The Emperor, the Pope and the Generals make it.

COOK (*To Chaplain*): As a mature man you should have admitted that you couldn't give advice. How can we know anything for sure? (*To Courage*) The way things are the best you can do is get rid of the goods quickly before the price falls to nothing.

COURAGE: That's intelligent advice. I believe I'll do it.

CHAPLAIN: Because the Cook says so.

COURAGE: Well why didn't you suggest it? He's right. I'd better go to market instead of to church. (*She gets into the wagon.*)

COOK: A point for me, Chaplain. You're not very farsighted. You should have answered: do you mean to say I advised you? All I did was discuss politics. And you shouldn't light into me so. Such squabbling is unbecoming to your cloth.

CHAPLAIN: I'll murder you, if you don't shut your mouth, unbecoming or not.

COOK (*Pulling off his boots and unwrapping rags from his feet*): You can always get another position. Cooks aren't needed—there's nothing to cook. Only people won't believe that things have changed so.

CHAPLAIN: You didn't talk this way in the past. You simply want to worm your way in here.

(*Yvette Potier enters, dressed in black. She is rigged out with a walking stick, has grown much fatter and is thickly powdered.*)

YVETTE: Here we are all together. Does this cart belong to Mother Courage?

CHAPLAIN: Quite right. And with whom do we have the pleasure?

YVETTE: With Colonel Starhemberg's Lady, good people. Where is Courage?

CHAPLAIN (*Shouts into the cart*): Colonel Starhemberg's Lady would like to speak to you!

COURAGE: I'll be right out.

YVETTE: It's Yvette!

COURAGE: Goodness, Yvette!

YVETTE: Come to see how you are. (*As the Cook turns sharply*)
Harry!

COOK: Yvette!

YVETTE: Why not? And how did you get here?

COOK: In a cart.

CHAPLAIN: So you know each other? Intimately?

YVETTE: I should think so. (*She looks at the Cook*) Fat.

COOK: You're not so slim yourself.

YVETTE: Anyway, I'm glad to run into you, lout! I can tell you
what I think of you.

CHAPLAIN: By all means do so, but wait until Courage comes out.
(*Courage emerges with a lot of wares. They embrace.*)

COURAGE: Yvette! But why are you in mourning?

YVETTE: Don't you think it's becoming? My husband, the Colonel,
died a couple of years ago.

COURAGE: That old fellow who nearly bought my wagon?

YVETTE: No, his older brother.

COURAGE: Things haven't gone badly with you. At least you're
one person who got something out of the war.

YVETTE: Up and down and then up again, that's the way it goes.

COURAGE: Well, let's not talk about the Colonel.

CHAPLAIN (*To Cook*): If I were in your place, I'd warm up to
her again. (*To Yvette*) You promised to tell us what you
thought of this gentleman.

COOK: Now Yvette, don't make a scene here.

COURAGE: This is a friend of mine, Yvette.

YVETTE: That's Fife-and-Drum-Harry.

COOK: Never mind my nickname. My name is Lamb.

COURAGE (*Laughs*): Fife-and-Drum-Harry! Who drove the women
crazy! (*Sings*) Fife-and-Drum-Harry, why are you so
rough to me? The Cook from the Second Regiment! And I
kept your pipe for you!

CHAPLAIN: And smoked it, too.

COURAGE: A man of the world. I'll really have to sit down.

YVETTE: It's lucky that I can warn you against him. There's no worse rascal at large on the Flemish coast. He's brought trouble to as many women as he has fingers.

COOK: That was long ago. And it's not true anyway.

YVETTE: Stand up when a lady talks to you! How I loved this man. And then he went off with a little brunette with bow-legs and got her in trouble, too, of course.

COOK: Well, I seem to have brought you luck, anyway.

YVETTE: Hold your tongue, you disgusting mess! You watch out for him. A man like that is dangerous, even when he's down and out.

COURAGE (*To Yvette*): Come, come, don't heap coals of fire on his head, it's bald enough as it is. I've got to get rid of my stuff before the price falls. Perhaps, with your connections, you can put me in touch with a regiment. I don't know how to get rid of anything in a city. A city isn't a city any more. Most of the houses are burnt down and only half the residents are left alive. Appeal to his conscience, Chaplain, he needs it. (*Laughs*) And take care of Kattrin or he'll seduce her and desert her before you can say Jack Robinson. (*She calls into the cart*) Kattrin, never mind church, we're going to market. But we're going out this afternoon so get ready and be sure to wash your neck.

YVETTE: And to think, ten years ago, I still would have slapped his face. (*She and Courage go out laughing.*)

CHAPLAIN: It seems I have the last word. The mills of the gods grind slowly. And you complained of my jokes!

COOK: I never have any luck. To tell the truth, I'd hoped for a good hot meal. I've been starved to death and now they've slandered me and you get an entirely false impression. I think I'll keep out of the way till that woman goes.

CHAPLAIN: I think you will, too.

COOK: Chaplain, peace hangs heavy on my hands. Man must endure fire and sword because he is born in sin. I only wish

I could be roasting a fat capon for the General, God knows where he is, in mustard sauce with little yellow carrots.

CHAPLAIN: Red cabbage. Red cabbage with capon.

COOK: That's right, but he liked carrots.

CHAPLAIN: He was a fool.

COOK: You always ate them greedily, too.

CHAPLAIN: Under protest.

COOK: Anyway, you must admit, those were the days.

CHAPLAIN: That I am forced to admit.

COOK: After you called her a scavenger, your days are numbered here.

CHAPLAIN: Everyone's days are numbered.

COOK: What are you staring for?

CHAPLAIN: My Lord, it's Eilif! (*Eilif enters followed by two soldiers with bayonets. His hands are bound. He is pale as death.*)

What's the matter with you?

EILIF: Where's my Mother?

CHAPLAIN: In town.

EILIF: I heard she was here. They gave me leave to visit her.

COOK (*To Soldiers*): Where are you taking him?

SOLDIER: Where it won't be healthy for him.

CHAPLAIN: What has he been doing?

SOLDIER: Broke into a farmer's house. The woman is dead.

CHAPLAIN: How could you do a thing like that?

EILIF: It's no different from what I did all along.

COOK: But in peace time!

EILIF: Shut your face. Can I sit here till she comes?

SOLDIER: There's not time enough.

CHAPLAIN: In wartime you honored him for such things. He sat at the General's right hand. It was bravery. Couldn't this be explained to the bailiff?

SOLDIER: No use of that. What's brave about taking cattle from a farmer?

CHAPLAIN: We should at least fetch out Kattrin.

EILIF: Rather give me a swallow of schnapps. I need it.

SOLDIER: No time for that. Come on.

CHAPLAIN: And what shall we tell your mother?

EILIF: Tell her . . . tell her nothing, do you hear?

(Soldiers drag him away.)

CHAPLAIN: I shall go with you on your difficult journey.

EILIF: I don't need you.

CHAPLAIN: You don't know yet. *(To Cook)* Better not tell her anything. Just say he was here and he may be back tomorrow. Meantime I'll return and bring the news. *(Hurries out. Cook looks after him, shaking his head. He walks up and down nervously. Then he approaches the cart.)*

COOK: Hi there! Won't you come out? I know why you've hidden away from peace. I might just as well myself. I'm the General's Cook, don't you remember me? I'm wondering if you have a little something to eat until your mother comes back. I'd like just a bit of bacon or bread to pass the time. *(He looks in)* She's got the covers over her head. *(Sound of cannons)* What the devil's going on now?

(Courage comes running in. She is out of breath and still has her goods.)

COURAGE: Peace is already over, Cook. There's been war for the last three days. And I hadn't time to get rid of the stuff as I'd planned. There's shooting in the city. We must get the wagon off immediately. Katrin, pack up! I've seen no sign of Eilif. I'd like to know where he's keeping himself. Why are you uneasy? Anything wrong?

COOK: Nothing.

COURAGE: There is, though. I can see it in your face.

COOK: It's the fault of the war, I dare say. Now it may be tomorrow night before I get a hot meal in my belly.

COURAGE: That's a lie, Cook.

COOK: Eilif was here. But he had to go right off again. He'll be back tomorrow.

COURAGE: So he was here? Well, having to go away isn't the worst that could happen. But we have to leave, too. Perhaps

we'll see him on the march. I'll travel with our people, now.
How did he look?

COOK: Same as ever.

COURAGE: He's one that will never change. War can't take him away from me. He's smart. Are you going to help me pack?
(*She begins to pack*) What did he have to say? Is he in favor with the General? Did he tell you anything about his heroic exploits?

COOK (*Sombrely*): I hear he's repeated one of them.

COURAGE: You'll tell me about it later. Now we have to be on our way. (*Katrin looks out, pinched and tear-stained*) Katrin, peace is gone again. We travel on. (*Katrin slowly goes to work. Courage speaks to the Cook.*) What are you going to do?

COOK: I'll go to town and enlist. If I only had a uniform. Have you got one?

COURAGE (*Tossing him a breastplate*): I'll throw one out to you.
Can't you go as a cook?

COOK: They don't need cooks. The places are all taken. I inquired all over. (*He is struggling to get into the breastplate.*)

COURAGE: You're too fat. They can't make a soldier out of you anymore. I propose that you . . . but where can the Chaplain be?

COOK: In the city with Eilif.

COURAGE: Then come along with us for a while. I need one helper.

COOK: I'll never wear a uniform again. And that affair with Yvette . . .

COURAGE: Doesn't lower you in my eyes. On the contrary. Where there's smoke there's fire. That's all. Are you coming with us?

COOK: I don't care if I do. Does the tent go?

COURAGE: Yes. They're already drumming for reveille. Let's hope the Chaplain follows us very shortly. He has bad feet. But we can't wait. We've got to get across to the Lutherans. Perhaps I'll see Eilif again by tonight. That I'd like best of

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all. It was a short peace, wasn't it? Off again so soon! (*She sings while the Cook and Kattrin hitch themselves to the cart*)

From Ulm to Metz, and up and down
Good Courage goes to ply her trade
And war can't live on lead alone.
Though war has many mouths to feed
On lead and powder nourishment,
It needs its cannon fodder, too.
So run and join the regiment
Or mar the war, and this means you.

(*She plays the refrain AND SPRING RETURNS, on the harmonica.*)

SCENE 4

The great holy war has already lasted sixteen years. Germany has lost half of its inhabitants. Violent pestilences kill what the massacres spare. Hunger rages in a formerly fruitful countryside. Wolves ransack the half-burned cities. In the fall of 1634 we meet Courage again in the German spruce forest near the path of the Swedish Army. A severe winter came early this year. Since business goes badly the only resort left is begging. The Cook receives a letter from Utrecht and gets dismissed.

In front of a parsonage. Grey morning in early winter. There are puffs of wind. Mother Courage and the Cook are sitting on the cart in ragged sheepskins.

COOK: Everything dark. There's nobody up.

COURAGE: But it's a parsonage. When the bells ring he'll have to crawl out of the feathers. Then he has hot soup.

COOK: How can that be? We've seen the whole village is burnt to a crisp.

COURAGE: Someone lives here. A dog barked a little while ago.

COOK: Even if they have anything, they won't give.

COURAGE: Perhaps if we sing . . .

COOK: I've had enough of this. I told you I had a letter from Utrecht saying my mother died of cholera and the tavern is mine. Here's the letter, if you don't believe it. I'm showing it to you, even though it doesn't concern you, to let you see what a fuss my aunt makes about this wandering life of mine.

COURAGE (*Reads letter*): Cook, I, too, am tired of travelling around. I begin to think I'm some sort of a bloodhound; I track down meat for my customers and get none myself. I've nothing to sell and the people have nothing to pay for that nothing. In Saxony a fellow offered to put up a pound of old parchments for two eggs and in Wurtemberg they left me their plow for a little sack of salt. What good is a plow? Nothing but brambles grow any more. In Pommaria the villagers wanted to eat up the younger children and the nuns were caught committing robbery.

COOK: The world is dying off.

COURAGE: Many a time I see myself journeying through Hell with my cart selling brimstone or through Heaven selling provisions for travel to erring souls. If I could find a place where I and the children I still have wouldn't be tossed from pillar to post, I might live out a few peaceful years.

COOK: We can run the tavern together. Think it over, Courage. I have decided that, today, with or without you, I return to Utrecht—and no later than today.

COURAGE: I must talk to Kattrin. It's rather short notice to make up your mind in. And in such cold weather with nothing in your belly. Kattrin! (*Kattrin climbs out of the wagon*) Kattrin, there is something I want you to know about. The Cook and I would like to go to Utrecht. He has inherited a tavern. There you could establish yourself and make friends. Many folks set a store by respectability and looks aren't everything. I favor this idea myself. The Cook and I get along together. I must say he has a business head. We'd be sure of eating, that would be splendid, wouldn't it? And you'd have a real bed big enough for you to stretch out in. How would that be

From now on, one can't live in the streets. You might go to the dogs. You've got lice as it is. We have to decide and this is the reason. The Swedes must march north and we can go with them. (*She points to the left*) I think we'll make a decision, Kattrin.

COOK: Courage, I want a word with you alone.

COURAGE: Get back into the cart, Kattrin. (*She does.*)

COOK: I interrupted you because I see that you, on your part, have misunderstood me. I thought I shouldn't have to put it into words because it's plain enough. But if it isn't, then I have to say it straight out. There can't be any question of taking her with you.

COURAGE: I don't believe I understand you.

COOK: I think you do.

(*Kattrin sticks her head out of the cart and listens.*)

COURAGE: Do you mean I should leave Kattrin behind?

COOK: Why not? Can't you see for yourself there's no place for her in the tavern? It's not big enough for three bartenders. If we two put our shoulders to the wheel, we can make a living out of it, but three is out of the question.

COURAGE: So she is to be left out?

COOK: Who's talking about leaving her out. She can keep the cart.

COURAGE: I thought she might find a husband in Utrecht.

COOK: Don't make me laugh. How can she find a husband? Dumb and disfigured besides. And at her age.

COURAGE: Don't talk too loud.

COOK: Loud or soft, what difference does it make? And that's another reason why I can't have her in the tavern. The guests wouldn't want something like that in front of their faces all the time. You can't imagine such a thing.

COURAGE: Shut your face. I told you not to talk so loud.

COOK: There's a light in the parsonage. We can sing now.

(*They get down and go near the side of the house.*)

COURAGE: Cook, how could she pull the cart alone? She is afraid

of the war. She couldn't endure it. And what dreams she has! I hear her moaning at night. Especially after a battle. I don't know what she sees in her dreams. She suffers so from pity. Just now I found she had hidden away a hedgehog the cart ran over.

Cook: The tavern is too small. (*He calls out*) Kind Sir, servants, and people of the house, we are going to sing the song of Solomon, Julius Caesar and other great spirits who got no profit from anything. And you will see that we, too, are respectable people and have a hard time keeping body and soul together, especially in winter. (*Sings*)

Behold wise Solomon, mark well
The sorry fate that him befell,
All things were clear to him as dawn,
He cursed the hour he was born.
He saw that all was vanity,
How wise and great that Solomon.
Before a single day is done
The moral's clear to everyone.
If wisdom brought him his sad end,
God bless the fellow who has none.

So all the virtues of this world are really dangerous, as the pretty song teaches. We are better without them if we have a pleasant life and, for instance, breakfast, or a bowl of warm soup. I, for example, have none and want some. I am a soldier, but what has my bravery in so many battles done for me? Nothing, I am hungry and might as well have stayed piddling around at home. What did I get out of it?

Behold brave Caesar and mark well
The sorry fate that him befell.
How like a God upon a throne!
His cruel murder is well known,
Just when his reign was well begun,
He cried so loud, "You, too, my son!"

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Before a single day is done
The moral's plain to everyone.
If valor brought him his sad end,
God bless the fellow who has none.

(*Half aloud*) They don't look so bad. (*Aloud*) Kind Sir, servants and people of the house! Perhaps you say, ah yes, bravery is nothing to nourish a man with, but try honor. That should have some effect and at least keep you from utter starvation. And so, how does it work?

The virtuous Socrates mark well
Who nothing but the truth would tell.
Alas, for this no thanks they gave
But sent him to an early grave.
The poisoned cup he could not shun.
How virtuous was Athen's son!
Before a single day is done
The moral's plain to everyone.
If virtue brought him his sad end,
God bless the fellow who has none.

And that's how it is with us! We are respectable people, we don't steal, we don't kill, we don't burn. And, so as you see, we sink lower and lower and the song is proven true and soup is hard to get and if we were different and robbed and stole perhaps we should have enough to eat! For indeed virtue doesn't pay—only crime. That's how the world is though it shouldn't be.

Behold us honest people then
Who keep the good commandments ten
And profit from them not a bit.
You, who by glowing ovens sit,
Come help us in our bitter need.
Such were a good and pious deed.
Before a single day is done

The moral's plain to every one.
 If piety has laid us low
 God bless the fellow who has none.

VOICE (*From above*): Come up here! There's hot soup for you.

COURAGE: I can't swallow a morsel. Is this your last word? We understood each other so well!

COOK: My last word. Think it over.

COURAGE: I don't have to think it over. I'll never leave her here.

COOK: That's showing no sense at all. But I can't change things. I'm not inhuman, the tavern just isn't big enough. And now we must go up or we'll get nothing and we've been singing here in the cold.

COURAGE: I'll fetch Kattrin.

COOK: Better hide something to take back to her. If three of us turn up they'll get frightened.

COURAGE: Then I'll just go up and see if they'll give me something I can take away. (*Both exit. Kattrin climbs out of the cart with a bundle. She looks about her to see if they are gone. Then, sobbing, she arranges an old skirt of her mother's next to a pair of the Cook's breeches on the wheel of the cart so they will easily be noticed. She is now ready and takes up her bundle just as Mother Courage returns from the house.*) Kattrin! Kattrin, wait! Where are you going with that bundle? Are you completely out of your wits? (*She looks in the bundle*) She's packed her things! Did you hear what we said? I told him to take his dirty tavern and Utrecht with it. What do we want with it? You and I don't belong in any tavern. (*She sees the trousers and the skirt*) How stupid you are! What would I have done if I'd seen these things and you were gone? (*She holds Kattrin fast as the latter tries to break away*) Don't think I sent him off because of you. It was on account of the cart. I'm used to the cart. It had nothing to do with you. It was on account of the cart. We're going the other way and we'll leave the Cook's stuff here where he can find it, the stupid brute! (*She climbs in and tosses a few other things alongside the*

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trousers) And now we've put him out of the business and we'll never take anyone else in. So we're off again together. This winter will pass, too, like all the others. Hitch yourself up. It's likely to snow.

(They hitch themselves to the cart and draw it away. There is a puff of wind. Then the Cook returns, still eating. He stares in astonishment at his belongings.)

INTERSCENE

(A country road. Mother Courage and Kattrin are pulling the cart. They pass a farmhouse. Within a voice is singing.)

The rosebush that we tended,
And well we knew its worth,
The rose so gaily blooming
We set, when March was ended,
And gave no further grooming.
Thank God for any bit of earth
With roses gaily blooming.

When snow and windy weather
Blow till the fir trees wave,
We have no cause to shiver,
Our roof we quickly cover
With straw we thatch it over.
Thank God for any roof you have
In snow and windy weather.

SCENE 5

January 1636. The Emperor's troops threaten the Protestant town of Halle. The stone begins to speak. Mother Courage leaves her daughter and travels on alone. The war is nowhere near over.

The worn and ragged covered cart is standing by a farmhouse

with a tremendous straw roof that leans against a rocky cliff. It is night. Out of the woods come a Second Lieutenant and Three Soldiers in full armor.

LIEUTENANT: I won't have the slightest noise. If anyone shouts, spear him down.

FIRST SOLDIER: But we must knock, if we want a guide.

LIEUTENANT: Knocking is an ordinary noise. A cow can bump against the wall of her stall.

(Soldiers knock at the farmhouse. An old farmwoman opens. She says nothing. Two soldiers enter.)

MAN'S VOICE: What is it?

(There is a gurgle. The soldiers bring out an old farmer and his son.)

LIEUTENANT *(Points to the cart out of which Kattrin is peering)*: There's another one. *(A soldier drags her out)* Are you all that live here?

OLD FARMER: This is my son. That's a dumb girl. Her mother is in town making purchases. They're sutlers, they travel about.

LIEUTENANT: I warn you to keep quiet. You get the spear in your ribs at the slightest noise. I need someone to show us the path above the city.

YOUNG FARMER: I don't know any path. *(Soldier jabs him in the back with a spear)* I don't serve Catholics.

LIEUTENANT: Draw your sword and threaten him.

(Young Farmer is forced to his knees and threatened with the sword.)

YOUNG FARMER: To save my life, I won't do it.

FIRST SOLDIER: I know how to make him reasonable. *(Goes to barn)* Two cows and an ox. Listen to me. If you don't show some sense, I'll saber the cattle.

YOUNG FARMER: Don't!

OLD WOMAN *(Weeps)*: Good Captain, spare our cattle or we'll starve.

LIEUTENANT: It's all over with them if he's obstinate.

FIRST SOLDIER: I'll begin with the ox.

YOUNG FARMER (*To Old Man*): Must I? (*Old Man nods*) I'll do it.

OLD WOMAN: Oh, thank you, Good Captain, for sparing us, thank you forever—Amen.

(*Old Man prevents her from showing more gratitude.*)

FIRST SOLDIER: I tell you I knew right away the ox was their most cherished possession. (*Led by the Young Farmer, they exit.*)

OLD FARMER: I'd like to know what they intend to do. Nothing good, I'll be bound.

OLD WOMAN: Perhaps they're only scouts. What are you up to?

OLD FARMER (*Leaning a ladder against the roof*): Seeing if they're alone. (*From above*) Something moving up in the woods. I see things up as far as the stone bridge. And the light shows up armored men. And a cannon. It's more than a regiment. God preserve the city and everyone in it!

OLD WOMAN: Is there a light in the city?

OLD FARMER: No, they're still asleep. (*He climbs down*) If they make a breach, they'll put everyone to the sword.

OLD WOMAN (*Embraces Katrin, who emits an alarmed cry*): How can you talk like that before her. Her mother is in town. Don't be frightened, how could anything happen to her? The lookout will see it all directly.

OLD FARMER: The lookouts in the tower on the slope must have been put out of the way or they'd blow the horn.

OLD WOMAN: If there were more of us . . .

OLD FARMER: Alone up here with a cripple . . .

OLD WOMAN: You mean we can't do anything?

OLD FARMER: What?

OLD WOMAN: Run down to the city.

OLD FARMER: The whole slope is full of their men.

OLD WOMAN: Give some signal.

OLD FARMER: Then they'd come and do away with us.

OLD WOMAN: I can't bear just to look on.

OLD FARMER: We can't do anything. All the time we could do nothing. They rob and burn and kill and declare war and we have to endure it.

OLD WOMAN (*To Kattrin*): Pray, poor creature, pray! We can't do anything against the spillers of blood. Even if you can't speak, you can pray. Though no one else does, He will hear you. And I will help. (*They all kneel, Kattrin behind the farm people*) Our Father who art in Heaven, hear our prayer. Let not the city perish with all therein who sleep and suspect nothing. Awaken them so they may arise and go to the walls and see how the enemy comes upon them with spears and cannons at night, over the meadows, down from the mountainside. (*Turning toward Kattrin*) And guard our mother, and bring it to pass that the lookout does not sleep, but awakens, or it will be too late. Our son-in-law is also there. He is within with his four children; let them not perish, they are innocent and know nothing. (*Still to Kattrin, who moans*) One is less than three, the oldest seven. (*Kattrin jumps up, as if distracted*) Our Father, hear us, from thee alone cometh our help or we perish, for we are weak and have no spears or anything else, or anyone to trust in and are in thy hand with our cattle and the whole farm, even as the city. It, too, is in thy hand and the enemy is at the walls in great strength. (*Kattrin, unnoticed, has slipped into the cart, taken something out, hidden it under her skirt, and is now climbing the ladder to the roof of the house*) Think of the children which are threatened, especially the very littlest, and the greybeards who cannot escape, and all other poor creatures.

OLD FARMER: And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Amen.

(*Kattrin, sitting on the roof, begins to beat the drum which she has hidden under her skirt.*)

OLD WOMAN: Lord Jesus, what is she doing?

OLD FARMER: She's lost her mind.

OLD WOMAN: Get her down, quick! (*The Old Farmer runs to*

the ladder but Kattrín pulls it up on the roof) She'll ruin us!

OLD FARMER: Stop that noise, this minute, you cripple!

OLD WOMAN: You'll bring the Emperor's troops down on us.

OLD FARMER (*Looking for stones*): I'll knock you off!

OLD WOMAN: Have you no pity? We have relatives there, too: a son-in-law with four children and we can't do anything. It's all over with us, if the troops come, they'll cut us to pieces. (*Kattrín stares far off toward the city and goes on drumming. Old Woman speaks to her husband.*) And I told you not to let such tramps on the farm. What do they care if our last cow is driven off!

(*The Lieutenant, the Soldier and the Young Farmer come running back.*)

LIEUTENANT: I'll cut you to pieces!

OLD WOMAN: We can't do anything. She stole up there. She's a stranger.

LIEUTENANT: Where's the ladder?

OLD FARMER: Up there with her.

LIEUTENANT: I order you to drop that drum!

OLD WOMAN: Her mother is in the city.

LIEUTENANT: You're all plotting together. You won't live to tell the tale!

OLD FARMER: They've cut some spruce up in the woods. If we fetch a long one we can push her off.

LIEUTENANT (*Seizes him and rushes off, saber in hand*): Come along and help carry it. (*Two soldiers follow.*)

(*The Old Woman on her knees is praying silently. The four come back. They drag a log and try to reach Kattrín but she merely crawls higher on the roof where they cannot reach her.*)

FIRST SOLDIER: I beg leave to make a proposition. (*He whispers in the Lieutenant's ear. The latter nods.*) Listen you, we'll make you an offer. Come down and go straight into the city with us. Point out your mother and she'll be spared. (*Kattrín keeps on drumming.*)

LIEUTENANT (*Shoves him roughly away*): She doesn't trust you.

With your face, it's no wonder. (*He calls up to her*) If I give you my word? I am an officer and you can take my word of honor. (*She drums all the harder*) She has no faith in anything.

FIRST SOLDIER: We can't let this go on much longer. They're bound to hear it in the city.

LIEUTENANT: We have to make a noise with something to drown out the drumming.

FIRST SOLDIER: We don't dare make a noise.

LIEUTENANT: Something they won't suspect, stupid. Something that isn't military.

OLD FARMER: I can hew with the ax.

LIEUTENANT: Yes, chop. (*Old Farmer picks up the ax and chops the log*) Chop harder, harder, you're chopping for your life. (*Katrin has been listening and not drumming so loud. She looks distressed but keeps on drumming.*)

LIEUTENANT: Not loud enough. (*To First Soldier*) You chop, too.

OLD FARMER: I've only one ax.

LIEUTENANT: We'll have to set the farm on fire. We'll have to smoke her out.

OLD FARMER: That's no good, Captain. If they see fire in the city, they'll know the whole story.

(*Katrin listens as she drums. Now she laughs.*)

LIEUTENANT: Look, she's laughing at us. I can't stand this. I'll shoot her down even if it ruins everything. Fetch the bullet box.

OLD FARMER: I have it. Her cart is standing over there. If we cut it to pieces, she'll stop. They have nothing but their cart.

LIEUTENANT (*To Old Farmer*): Cut it to pieces! (*Shouts up at her*) We'll destroy your wagon, if you don't stop drumming. (*The Old Farmer hits the wagon a few times*) Do you hear, you brute? (*Katrin emits cries of despair, looking toward the wagon, but keeps on drumming*) Where's that filthy wretch with the bullet box?

BRECHT

FIRST SOLDIER: They can't have noticed anything in the city yet or we'd have heard shots.

LIEUTENANT (*Shouts up*): They don't hear you. And now we're going to shoot you down. Once and for all, throw down the drum.

YOUNG FARMER (*Suddenly*): Go on drumming or they're all done for! Go on drumming, go on drum . . .

(*The Soldier throws him down and strikes him with a spear. Katrin begins to weep, but goes on drumming.*)

OLD WOMAN: Don't hit him in the back! For God's sake you're killing him!

(*The Second Soldier comes running up with the bullet box.*)

SECOND SOLDIER: We'll be court-martialled, every one of us. The Colonel is foaming at the mouth, Lieutenant.

LIEUTENANT: Stop it! Stop it! (*Still shouting up as the guns are cocked*) For the last time, stop the drumming! (*Weeping, Katrin drums as loud as she can*) Fire! (*Soldiers fire. Katrin is struck, hits the drum once more and sinks slowly down.*) That's the end of that noise! (*But at the last blows on the drum, cannon are let off in the city. Far off one hears alarm-bells and thunder of cannon.*)

FIRST SOLDIER: She's done it!

EPILOGUE

Same scene. Towards morning. Drums are heard and fifes of troops marching off in the distance. Mother Courage is sitting in front of the cart with her daughter. The Farm People stand near by.

FARM PEOPLE: You must leave, wife. There's only one more regiment to come. You can't go away from here alone.

COURAGE: She is still breathing. Perhaps she will go to sleep.

(Sings)

Eia popeia,
 What creeps in the hay?
 Neighbors' brats quarrel
 But mine are all gay.
 Neighbors go ragged
 While you go in silk,
 Dressed like an angel
 All white as milk.
 No crumb for the neighbors,
 You get plum pie.
 If it don't suit you
 Just tell me why.
 Eia popeia,
 What creeps in the hay?
 One lies in Poland,
 The other's astray.

Now she's asleep. You shouldn't have told her about your son-in-law's children.

FARM PEOPLE: She's not asleep. You must see now she has passed away. And you have got to go, too. There are wolves and what is worse, pillagers.

COURAGE (*Rising*): Yes.

FARM PEOPLE: Haven't you anyone else? Someone you can go to?

COURAGE: One left. My Eilif.

FARM PEOPLE: You must find him. We'll take care that she is respectably buried. You needn't worry about it.

COURAGE (*Before hitching herself to the wagon*): Here is some money for the burial. Let's hope I can pull the cart alone. Yes, it moves, there isn't much in it. (*Another Regiment goes by with fifes and drums*) Hallo, take me with you! (*She follows. The song is heard.*)

The war goes on, the war is here
 With all its prizes and its pain

B R E C H T

And though it last a hundred year,
The common man shall nothing gain.
His food is swill, his coat is spoil,
The army steals his penny piece,
And here's the wonder of it all,
It seems that war will never cease.

(Mother Courage, pulling her wagon joins in the chorus.)

And spring returns. Arise, Oh Christ!
The snow melts fast! The dead are clay.
And all that's left alive on earth
Must be up and on its way.

C U R T A I N

AZEFF WISCHMEIER,
THE BOLSHEVIK
BUREAUCRAT

BY

GEORG MANN

AZEFF WISCHMEIER, THE BOLSHEVIK BUREAUCRAT

ONE moment, the stage of history was bare. Suddenly, before the baffled eyelid could flicker, Azeff Wischmeier stood before the footlights, smiling apologetically and grabbing at the bouquets with both hands. To this day, no one can tell how it happened.

Not many men, even those with greater natural advantages, have been so successful in burying all trace of their origins. Some scholars, gazing intently at the hiatus which represents his career before 1917, have gone so far as to dispute his right to the name of Wischmeier. A frustrated band of White Russians living in Paris spent an entire winter spreading the rumor that he was actually Schmool Litvak, the illegitimate son of the Pultovich Rabbi. This canard fell of its own weight, but not before every minyan in the Pale had spent a Sabbath in intensive cursing. The Cossacks were similarly slandered, and wandered about the steppes for months, kicking their favorite horses in the stomach. Certain other writers have insisted that Wischmeier was no more than a party name, its English meaning similar to the Russian words for "hard" or "hardheaded." But a single glance at his history stamps him as one of the true, tiger breed. Mentally, Azeff was purest Wischmeier, refined only in the fiery crucible of Bolshevik struggle. Physically, every race that flowed over Russia, from the trousered Scythians to the wandering German horse-doctors, receding, had left a tidemark on his person.

A great gentleman, who was incidentally a leader of the British Conservative Party, once called Azeff, "an anemic Robespierre, so bloodless that his complexion was only a faint fresh-water blue." This description was as impartial as an anatomy textbook. His nose, which eked out a plurality of interest over the rest of his face, was long and twisted, with the tip so far from his

other features that it looked forlorn. In his youth, he had succumbed to stagefright and fallen off a speakers' platform, fracturing an iron railing with his nasal septum. Officially, it was written that his nose had been smashed when he fearlessly interposed his head between Stalin's prostrate form and a Cossack's murderous rifle butt at the siege of Tsaritsyn. Among themselves, his enemies whispered that his nose had never looked the same since he used it to open locks during his active days with the secret police.

Lusterless black hair wilted hopelessly down one side of his receding forehead, discouraged with the thankless task of masking such insignificance. In conversation, his eyes sought an automatic focus upon some invisible center of attraction that dangled just beyond the right shoulder of the person he was talking at. The lower lid of his left eye twitched convulsively, punctuating his sentences with an elusive political Morse Code all its own. His phrases came in sudden discrete barks, like a machine gun firing hopefully in the rain. His beard was black and scant. In the days when functionaries' moustaches were worn long, his was known to be padded with horsehair. Even after he began to eat regularly his figure stayed thin, bulging only in isolated localities with the enlarged muscles that mark a life devoted to office work. But deep in his heart, Azeff sensed that the worst thing about his appearance was its opposition to change and improvement, greater than that of a small town police chief's.

In the Museum of the Revolution in Leningrad, a few fading photographs preserve the excited street crowds of that city's heroic October days. Enthusiastic spectators are seen, lining the sidewalks, cheering the workers' militia as it marches by. Agitators, teetering on improvised platforms, harangue open air meetings at the factories. Patient, grinning lines meander across the fronts of foodshops. In the background of most of these photographs lurks a scrawny, thinly-bearded figure, busy edging his way toward the camera. Lank black hair falls aslant his face until it nudges an eager, ingratiating smile. One lower eyelid seems to

have twitched faster than the photographer's shutter. In the earliest scenes he wears a flimsy cotton jacket, his shoulders are hunched with cold. Later, a frogged and padded military tunic keeps the wind from his bony chest. A tiny automatic, helplessly submerged in a wicked-looking holster, pulls his body dangerously out of the perpendicular. Step by step, these photographs trace Azeff's climb from being a bystander to an assistantship in the claque, to a party membership, even to the heights of a minor official post. The same series records the climb of another leader, a little older, fuller-faced, heavier-moustached, whose thick shock of black hair grows almost down to his eyebrows. His fists are shoved solidly into the pockets of a simple private's jacket, a curved pipe droops from between his teeth. On his face there is the inscrutable mountain smile of self-satisfaction, the pleased expression of a man who has at last successfully added two and two.

During the bitter campaigns against Kolchak and Denikin, Azeff fearlessly roosted on a stool in the Moscow offices of the party, writing out membership cards and seeing to it that notices of arrearages in dues were sent out. At night he risked pneumonia in countless drafty meeting halls, spurring the workers on with fiery exhortations to turn their loose kopeks over to the Soviets. He was wounded twice in the line of duty. Both times the unfortunate automatic went off in the holster as he fiddled with the trigger while making a collection speech. He was decorated for his bravery and wounds, but never in groups of less than five thousand of his fellows. When the war ended, the veterans came back to headquarters to take over the bookkeeping and Azeff found himself out of a job.

There was only one alternative to starvation. Gloomily he resigned himself to a career in that dismal province of Bolshevik younger sons, the leadership of the world revolution.

Russia still soared in the manic stage of the proletarian upheaval, watching Western Europe with a nervous giggling excitement, like a small boy bracing himself during the seconds

until the biggest of his Fourth of July firecrackers explodes. Universal soviets were the next item on the agenda of history, although it was still possible to make up a principled pool as to the exact moment when they would take over the police force. All the Communists had to do was freeze out competition and keep their friends in control. Trains, whose coaches bulged with Comintern representatives until they looked like a string of goats inside a boa constrictor, left Moscow daily, scattering surplus instruction books on how to run a revolution along the right of way. Azeff prepared himself for his career in foreign service. He bought an elementary geography book and religiously memorized the colors that marked the different countries on the map. Then, posing as a sympathetic Paraguayan journalist, he managed a fifteen minute interview with one of the Kremlin experts on fanning the flames of discontent in other localities. He emerged with a commission appointing him a district leader for the imminent German Revolution in his pocket and a small portion of the expert's moustache still sticking between his front teeth.

They outfitted him with the standard equipment, an overcoat with a fur collar, a reader's card in the British Museum, and a brief handbook of conversational German, edited to serve the needs of a militant working class. Instead of the customary diletante phrases, for example, "Can you please direct me to the haberdashery store owned by the uncle of my aunt?" this handbook relied on sturdier material, sentences such as, "Hold your mouth, you stool pigeon lackey of the renegade Kautsky, before I bash your teeth in with this draft program of the Comintern!" and, "Pull the pin out with your teeth, comrade, before you throw the hand grenade at the policeman." As an extraordinary mark of favor, Azeff was given a money belt crammed with Tsarist specie and an orthopedic brace to hold him erect when he wore it.

At the endless committee meetings, Azeff's taciturnity aroused the Germans to an extreme piccolo stretch of admiration. They

wore themselves hoarse, trying to imitate the grudging gruffness of his, "Da," the contemptuous rise and fall of his, "Niet." To the local comrades, Azeff seemed as unintelligible and unemotional as one of his own revolutionary blueprints. But sometimes after midnight he strolled through the deserted streets, mentally expropriating whole blocks of apartment buildings and erecting personal hecatombs of Social-Democrats. The business-like Germans chipped small fragments from the granite facade of Azeff's self-confidence and peddled them for souvenirs. For the first few days, not a party member went to bed at night without worrying that the revolution would take place while he slept. Azeff refused to spare himself. Awake or asleep, he took a prominent part in every meeting and conference. But as hard as he worked, three-quarters of the dues payers melted away within the first six months. Azeff dug deeper into his money belt, scattered paper marks around as though they were cigarette ashes, but still his constituents vanished.

Nothing was left but to return to Moscow and report on his progress. On the train, he discovered, that although he had combined the correctest theory with the most energetic of practice, the objective world situation had been against him. Fortunately, the head office had also been casting around for just such a simple, satisfying explanation. Instead of being censured, Azeff was promoted and given transportation to the South Seas, to tickle the sprawling flanks of British imperialism.

Less than a month after his boat docked, both the tropical islands, Greater and Lesser Wabonga, were safely signed up in the camp of the soviets. Azeff's agitational methods were as simple as a policeman's ethics. His first convert came to the dialectic through a flashlight and a pair of almost new tennis shoes. The rest of the charter members were won over by the Wabongan equivalent of a free lunch counter. Safely based in the masses, Azeff called a conference, built around a pig, yam, and coconut feast, interspersed with three days of folk dancing. After the delegates finished eating, Azeff made a long speech, explaining

whom they represented and what they were delegates to. He stressed the fact that he came among them as a special representative of the Comintern, which was much like the Pacific Ocean but bigger and with considerably more influence. His sole object in life was to strike the chains of imperialistic exploitation from the fettered limbs of the backward peoples. Within a few seconds, hanging from the topmost limb of a palm tree and twisting furiously to avoid the close-swishing spears, he was offered an opportunity to retract the adjective "backward." Nevertheless, his propaganda found a rising market. It took only a few weeks for the terms "exploitation" and "fetters" to seep into the native consciousness. Under his direction, the delegates elected a praesidium and a central committee. Each was composed of three Greater Wabongans, two Lesser Wabongans, two delegates whose wives gardened, two whose wives fished, two whose wives hunted, two single men, two single women, two wives, and a representative apiece from the Comintern, the youth, the sympathizers, and the non-Party elements. A witch doctor was ordered to send a resolution of thanks to Moscow by means of a juju pointing stick, for the local party seemed temporarily out of funds.

Under Azeff's leadership, the Wabonga Soviets launched their bid for state power by demanding the expropriation of the big landlords and the establishment of a rigid eight hour working day. When a stool pigeon among the delegates pointed out that neither landed property nor industry existed in the two islands, Azeff had the critic expelled as a Menshevik traitor. Later, he took considerable pleasure in sampling the menu of a celebration feast at which the recently expelled comrade formed the *pièce de résistance*.

The new government embarked on a vast campaign of unemployment relief, although it almost went bankrupt when the natives discovered that unemployed was what they had been most of their lives. Each agriculturist was guaranteed the full product of his wife's toil with nothing off for rent. There was

isolated criticism at first, but this disappeared when the party leaders saw to it that the budding factionalists were invariably honored when the time came round to pick the sacrificial victims for the ancestral sharks. The party youth launched a long term program to renovate all forms of social life and to remove the major obstacles—a couple of superannuated busybodies—to the free relationships between the sexes. These relationships eventually became very much appreciated by the natives. Azeff, after an initial timidity, even went so far as to introduce the idea of work. But the novelty soon palled, and he was compelled to add more and more attractive features, foremen, time clocks, and all the rest of the decorative trappings of western civilization. Two specially appointed commissars were the most impressive aspect of this program. They wandered from garden to garden, timing the snores of the adult males as they slept in the shade, counting the beads of sweat on the women's foreheads as they worked among the vegetables. Having two commissars was also Azeff's idea. In this way, they could keep a close check on each other. In his own opinion, Azeff's greatest personal triumph was the introduction of pottery to replace the laborious basketry of the Wabongans. With this step, he felt he had crammed four thousands years of progress into a single month. "Let any other of the special representatives do as well," he muttered to himself as a lovely native maiden fanned his brow and annoyed the passing insects.

Into this island paradise, Threadneedle Street sent a schooner, loaded to the Plimsoll Mark with Woolworth mirrors and cheaper jewelry. When the trader docked, Azeff happened to be up in the hill country, burning images of the native gods and distributing photographs of Lenin. The moment that the captain spread his wares before the Central Committee, the Soviets crumpled. Azeff fled, leaving several of his wives behind as trophies for the sex-mad imperialistic invader. He hurried through Polynesia on a passport issued to George H. Jenks of Elmira, New York, a hardware merchant. At Singapore, he sent

off a long, coded cablegram which blamed his defeat on the treachery of the leaders of the Second International and the weakness of the rotten liberals. A weary clerk at the Comintern office sighed and ordered Azeff back to Germany, where the revolution once more seemed in danger of flourishing.

En route, Azeff casually acquired two freight cars full of inflated marks and a fistful of gold crowns that had once capped the teeth of the Tsar's favorite ballerinas. In one of the freight cars he picked up an unexpected bonus in the person of a shaggy looking tramp. The tramp volunteered the name of Schwartz and revealed a past as an ex-lieutenant in the Kaiser's bodyguard. If Azeff had been a big man before in Germany, he was a bigger one now, except when the light came from behind and outlined his figure with a damning preciseness. Schwartz was placed in charge of the military education of the German workers. He taught them how to load a rifle and most of the first two verses of the *Internationale*. Nights he stole through the Berlin streets, drawing mystic chalk marks on the pavement to locate his future barricades. Two policemen followed a few steps after his shy shadow, clicking their tongues in amazed admiration at the revolutionist's efficiency. The party units worked at so intense a speed that the heat produced by internal friction alone caused roses to bloom in the working class quarters in January. Young hotbloods on their way home from the shop drew imaginary beads on the corner Schupo with their forefingers and shouted "Boom, you're dead!" in voices that would have scared a professional hangman. Accountants on the police pension fund toiled overtime, making provisions to support a new batch of widows and orphans. Just before the collective impatience of the party members reached a point where it would have been profitable to bale it and sell it for guncotton, the fateful telegram from Moscow came. It read, "Fourteen thousand versts asked, twenty-four poods bid. Wire instructions," which the very sparrows at the riding academy knew meant, "Revolt tomorrow." All that night, panting volunteers tramped up the tenement stairs, whispering the ecstatic

message to gummy-eyed militiamen. Azeff spent the hours dreaming in his room, admiring the mental picture of himself as a German Lenin and trying to figure out a watertight scheme to cut the Russian leadership off without a shilling. Just before dawn, a second telegram from Moscow arrived. Azeff tore open the envelope to read, "Selling entire stock, will take whatever offered." The Chief of Police had glanced at it twice and thankfully gone home to sleep. Even the wariest provocateur knew this meant, "Postpone barricades one week. Discussion still going on in the Central Committee." The messengers started out again, retracing their routes and shouting up the stairwells for the militia-men to put their rifles back under their mattresses and report to the factory in the morning.

The workers went on drilling, progressing by easy stages to "Parade Rest" and "Squads Right." Azeff was kept awake for thirty-six hours by the neaptide of contradictory telegrams from Moscow. The revolution was ordered for five o'clock in the afternoon on the coming Wednesday and postponed indefinitely. He was instructed to liquidate his political claims for three ministerial posts in the cabinet and to proceed to the immediate military overthrow of the Republic. He was told to pay no attention to the government whatsoever and conduct a vigorous campaign for funds for the Bulgarian Party. He was sent a baleful of resolutions thanking him for his heroic leadership and an equal number denouncing him for his stubborn insistence upon treason. Each mail brought its quota of draft programs, proclamations, and theses, all contradictory and vehement. He received separate and identical lists of comrades to elevate to the Central Committee and to expel. All these communications served one purpose, however. The officials of the Weimar Republic were so overawed by Russian revolutionary thoroughness that they would have surrendered at the slightest loud noise, if Azeff had but known it.

But, suddenly as they began, the telegrams stopped, leaving the whole question slightly more confused than it had been in the beginning. All Russia became absorbed in its own local

struggles, which became more and more exciting as both factions robbed each other's mailboxes and distributed character analyses of the opposing leaders from the back ends of convenient compost wagons. Azeff and Germany seemed as dead as Stalin's support of Kerensky. In vain Azeff waited for the cheery whistle of the messenger boy. Bored, Azeff's followers began to stay home at night, instead of staying up till dawn at committee meetings, arguing over what the Russians thought they meant by the latest telegrams.

The situation was desperate. Something spectacular had to be done before the last member switched his affections to chess or philately. After a series of conferences, Azeff and Schwartz decided that blowing up their own headquarters with a few of the leading comrades in it—blaming the explosion, of course, on the police force—would bring back the strayed sheep in a hurry. They soon agreed on a tentative list of the individuals to be blown up. Then came the problem of whose name was to head the roster of the honored dead. Azeff felt strongly that Schwartz, the beloved military leader of the German workers, was the obvious candidate. Schwartz retorted that the Comintern would have to look far before it discovered better martyr material than Azeff. "I can see your funeral now," he said, brushing away a tear. "Thousands of grief stricken workers will trudge in the rain out to the cemetery, following the pathetic little sack that holds your remains. The sky will be overcast and cloudy. A chill drizzle will add to the gloom of the occasion. There won't be a dry eye in any German tenement. Why, with luck, your assassination might up recruiting by as much as fifteen or twenty per cent."

Their argument grew louder, each acknowledging a profound feeling of unworthiness, each selflessly and objectively insisting upon yielding the supreme honor to the other. Politically outraged to the core, Azeff began to bellow. Schwartz, his fine sense of revolutionary timing hindered by the politician's personal whims, shouted ever louder. The neighbors stood it for the first three hours, then, in desperation, called the police. As the well-

remembered footsteps came clumping up the stair, Azeff climbed out a back window. Still piqued, Schwartz refused to follow. He was captured and sentenced to a year's hard labor for waking the district captain after midnight. Disillusioned with the revolution, he was released and took to peddling shoelaces and contraceptives on street corners. He made a modest living and eventually joined the Nazis with the hopes of increasing his trade. It was an ideal venture from the start. The Nazis welcomed Schwartz because he was the first respectable member of society who signed an application card. And Schwartz's business increased enormously, as a result of the incessant Nazi parades which wore out hundreds of pairs of shoelaces a week.

The only one who mourned the German revolution was the Minister of Posts and Telegraph. "If they had only continued their telegrams for another month," he used to sigh, "we could have paid off reparations, balanced the budget, pumped the water out of the mark, and still showed a profit."

Azeff fled Germany again. By this time his running reflexes worked easier than the drooling of Pavloff's dogs. In no time at all his money belt was packed and he stood waiting in line at the nearest railroad station, disguised in a pair of dark glasses and wearing a foreign looking cap which bore the legend "Pullman Porter." As his train puffed across Poland he wondered whether he ought to turn in a detailed expense account, or take a chance, just this once. Fifteen thousand dollars, the mortal remains of the German revolutionary movement, glowed tropically around his middle.

A scant six months later, he arrived in Russia. A junior clerk at the Comintern office timidly asked him for an accounting. Azeff raised his eyebrows expressively and said in a voice that brooked no contradiction, "They drugged my coffee. I was rolled."

Somewhat sadly, recalling the fifteen thousand dollars, the Secretary of the Comintern told Azeff that it might be better if he settled down in Russia and took part in the all-important task of assembling socialism in one country. Azeff asked for a few weeks'

vacation to survey the employment opportunities. He soon saw that it was obviously safer to function as a general trouble shooter, rather than become too closely identified with any particular phase of Soviet life. Particular phases of Soviet life, even in those early days, had the nasty habit of blowing up without warning and removing substantial sections of the identifiee's face.

One day, as Azeff sat in the Comintern offices, industriously straightening out bent paper clips, an emergency call came in from the Commissariat of Transportation. The railroads demanded a foolhardy executive, a man who would trust his life to the right of way in a desperate gamble to keep the rolling stock rolling. Not without misgivings, Azeff volunteered. At first he succeeded admirably, but the task of keeping the rolling stock rolling on the track had him licked from the start. The Russian railroads were in such a state of disrepair that humorists had long ago given up joking about them. Even the carrier pigeons that bore the urgent instructions to engineers and switchmen arrived at their destinations in a battered condition. Dead and moribund locomotives littered the roadbed, spilling their rusty iron entrails over into the neighboring wheat fields and imparting a higher mineral content to the workers' bread. Entire sections of the track disappeared between dusk and dawn, usually never to be seen again. Once Azeff's chief clerk stumbled on a fifty mile short line that had been missing since the Crimean War. Another time, an excursion train loaded with stitchers from a shoe-factory disappeared just beyond the city limits of Odessa and was not heard from again until it reached a siding twenty miles from Vladivostock. It was popularly believed that only the foreign specialists knew where the rails led, and they carried their guilty knowledge with them to the grave and beyond. Azeff worked hard, but with no appreciable result. He forced himself to work harder still; the situation even got worse. At last flesh and blood could bear no more, his nervous system filed a voluntary bankruptcy petition. A callous interne crated him up and shipped him off to a southern sanitarium where he could die out in the open

on the warm sand. But miraculously, Azeff didn't die, as his official biography was quick to point out.

After he had partially recovered, he was transferred to Intourist, to be placed in charge of a section engaged in overwhelming distinguished foreign visitors. His first months in office were spent in standardizing a tour that was guaranteed to turn out a product asthmatic with admiration and clamoring to buy Soviet Gold Bonds. Every town on the official itinerary was arbitrarily assigned a hospital, a creche, and a home for reforming drunkards. To save money, all three institutions were to be housed in the same building, but accessible through three conspicuously different entrances. While breakfasting on the train, the visitor was urged to sample a little fermented mare's milk to help himself understand the temperament of the Russian people. At the welcoming luncheon, the waiters insisted on keeping the victim's glass overflowing with the local champagne. Afterwards, he was loaded into an automobile, driven along certain carefully selected streets, and unloaded before his first contact with Russian social service. As he chatted with a member of the creche's staff, he was offered additional glasses of champagne, strengthened with a little nourishing potato alcohol. After a bit he was led back to the automobile, driven down the same streets but in the opposite direction, and deposited at the second entrance to the building. By timing the drinks, the three inspections could be made to fill an entire afternoon. Trained actors from the Moscow Art Theater appeared in each section visited, playing infants, pleasantly diseased workers, miraculously temperate alcoholics, or whatever else the local script called for. The same troupe was assigned to each tourist and followed him about the country, changing make-up and revising their act with each stand. To make absolutely certain that he would not stray too far from the prepared route, each tourist was kept harnessed in a soft leather leash. This did not impede his ordinary movements but kept him from going up side streets without an escort. Each night, tired, impressed, and comfortably hazy, he was taken off to a banquet and stuffed

with caviar, until the goldfish mewed hopefully at him as he passed by.

If the guest was a politician in his native country, he was supplied with detailed diagrams of the political structure of the Soviet Union, diagrams which made an abstract painting look as concrete as a viaduct. If he was a labor leader he was assured that all Soviet industry was organized and then his attention was directed toward other matters. Social scientists were plied with iced buckets of fermented statistics until their reason whirled helplessly about the point where X and Y met. And visiting authors were greeted at every railroad station by a cheering crowd of local literary lights who had spent months boning up on their works.

Lenin died. The more photographed leaders of the party invested in bulletproof vests and began to brew their tea with their own hands. Privately, Azeff decided that a wise man picked his cyclone cellar while the approaching storm was still affectionate with the horizon. In Russia there was obviously more of a future shifting scenery than in strutting about on the stage. The actors might quiver briefly and happily before the thunderous applause. But when the critics expressed a forty-five caliber disapproval, the cast seldom had time to dodge. The only clever course was to join the stagehands' union. Azeff was not at all surprised to discover that Russian scene shifters' collective bargaining organization was better known to its intimates as the secret police.

When Azeff first considered filling out an application for a union card, the Soviet police force was bloated with the bacterial activity that customarily precedes decomposition. At the end of the civil war, when dullness moved into the station locker room, most of the help who had signed up merely because they liked to shoot people legally restrained from shooting back, returned to their former jobs as school-teachers. Routine police activity was left in the hands of the beefy blotter sergeants and the over-developed muscular cases who walked the beats. These worthies passed easy, pleasant days, content to expropriate an occasional apple

from a Nepman's stand or shake down the melancholy relicts of the Tsarist general staff who worked the side streets after dark.

The political police tended their growing museum of introversions and inferiority complexes in a musty back room at headquarters. At rare intervals they bestirred themselves long enough to recruit the best members of foreign Communist parties for such vital work as photographing capitalist postoffices or buying up random demonstrations to celebrate the latest change in Soviet foreign policy. When Azeff finally traced them down and clumped up the stairs to apply for a job, their naturally arid emotions quickly evaporated with suspicion. Why a man in his right mind should want to join the secret police was completely beyond the comprehension of even the secret police. The personnel chief of the Cheka, or the OGPU, or the Commissariat of Internal Affairs, or the Mafia, as it is perhaps better known, scrutinized Azeff's application with a cold and probing eye. To begin with, he doubted that Azeff had sprung to a fullblown maturity the day the Tsar abdicated. He must have had parents for example. A quick telephone call to the Biological Institute established the fact that parents were an absolute essential for all human beings. Azeff blandly admitted the improbability of his tale but pointed out that any secret police in the world would jump at the chance of enlisting a man who had covered his tracks as thoroughly as he had. The personnel chief was struck by the soundness of this observation and promised to consider his case. The next day the postman brought Azeff the official "Little Wonder Mercury Shadowing Kit" and a booklet which explained the secret grip.

It became Azeff's self-appointed task to regenerate the political police, to give them the confidence necessary for success in the struggle for existence. Once he had explained his methods, the rest was easy. A deserving relative given a job in a milder climate, the results of a budget investigation confined to private circulation, the complete file of correspondence with an amenable foreign beauty stored away for reference only, and the official

involved became surprisingly responsive to anonymous telephone calls.

Internally, Azeff created a strongly braced, cross-indexed hierarchy which automatically kept a close check on itself. Five grades of membership were set up within the political police. The lowest even took in foreigners and was used only for such routine work as directing the personal affairs of Balkan royal families, mopping up the puddles of blood in the Lubianka each night, and starting the cheering at mass meetings. Grade Two spied on Grade One and all party members more than six months behind in their dues. Grade Three kept a close watch on all government officials, checking up on the turnover in postage stamps and the consumption of stationery. The fourth group watched the other three and supervised the lives of all citizens except members of the Politburo. Members of Grade Five spied solely on each other. Azeff briefly experimented with a sixth group, whose members were instructed to spy solely on themselves. Within a week, this section had put itself out of business. Every single Grade Six spy was sitting in jail, anxiously begging the turnkey to hit him over the head with a piece of lead pipe and put an end to his despicable career. Class Six perished to a man, but its brilliant espionage had saved the Socialist Fatherland from a fate worse than a consistent foreign policy.

Azeff saw to it that the heroes who tracked down ordinary crime were trained in the best scientific traditions. Their laboratories boasted more precise equipment than an optometrist's office. In ballistics, their experts did work that was the envy of the Sureté. And Scotland Yard sighed in grudging admiration of the Russian chemists' talent for precise identification of suspicious fluids and stains.

The political police were given equal facilities for doing good work. Commissioners and Inspectors kept slim by struggling through the network of dictaphone wires that crisscrossed their offices. Each official was kept in constant awareness of what was happening in the cubicles on either side of his own by an elabo-

rate system of mirrors. Propped up on every desk were the two standard reference works of the secret police, Eugene Sue's *Mysteries of Paris*, and the valuable mediaeval book, the *Hammer Against Witchcraft*. Two training courses were compulsory. The first thoroughly convinced the recruit that reality was merely an illusion, regardless of the opinion of the rest of the population. The second proved that illusion was the only reality, at least as far as the official handbook of regulations went.

Eventually, Azeff returned to the task of building socialism in one country, leaving the routine police work to the men he had trained. He still cherished his membership and honors in the Soviet Union's only worthwhile secret fraternal organization. He was as thrilled as the rawest recruit mopping up his first puddle in the Lubianka every time he strolled down the street, exchanging conspiratorial nods with every third passer-by and drawing the mystic forefinger of brotherhood suggestively across the throat. His metal membership badge, with the three crosses standing for courtesy, gentleness, and good fellowship, was pinned to the underside of his uniform collar. When he bathed, he held it reverently on his tongue.

After the military defeat of the White Guards, it became necessary to focus popular animosity against a new enemy. Nature had never been well-liked in Russia, even under the Tsar. The climate was too politically unreliable, the steppes were too flat, the tundra too cold and damp. The language was found to be unexpectedly difficult to speak, even for the natives. The peasant plowing, gouged viciously deeper than he needed, merely out of hatred for the land. The embittered factory worker watched unseen forces burn out his bearings and make cat's cradles out of his pulley belts. The coughing clerk twitched impatient shoulders against the drizzle as he walked frigidly to work. Nature was obviously the ideal object of the government's attack. And even if Nature retaliated in the campaign against her, the resulting disasters could be blamed on events clearly beyond the jurisdiction of the Orgburo.

The conspiracy against Nature was dignified with the name of the Five Year Plan. Politics and the revolution were stacked away in a convenient closet, to be guarded by young male relatives too weak for real men's work. If it had been only half as intense, interest in industrial production could still have qualified as an obsession with the vanguard of the proletariat. Lectures on the open-hearth process played three a day to audiences of five thousand people. The one-armed veteran of the Civil Wars was pushed into social obscurity by the man who succeeded in making a beet and a bean bloom in a spot that had but known the beet before. Even the school children chattered about time study and Taylorism as they played "Stone the Social-Democrats" during their lunch hour. Ambassadors almost forgot to worry about their luncheon menus as they trotted about from wholesaler to wholesaler with their sample cases under their arms. And one jittery genius achieved a transient fame and following when he announced that he had discovered that in less than fifty years, running at capacity production, the Soviet Union could easily produce enough ball bearings to refit all the roller skates in the world.

Like the others, Azeff read and praised the most popular novel of the industrial era, one that determined the literary fashion for almost six months. *Yusim, the Young Manager* sent hundreds of nubile factory hands to their vestal beds, sobbing with unrequited love for Yusim and their foreman. The hero of this tale, the waif Yusim, began his career as a sweeper in an automobile tire factory, sweeping up after the regular sweepers had gone home. His energy, his ready intelligence, and the rumor that he was of Georgian ancestry, soon brought him to the attention of the managers. As soon as it became known that the chief superintendent was in the habit of saying "Hello" to Yusim as they passed each other on the way to the lavatory, his rapid rise was inevitable. He galloped through a number of lesser jobs, and was promoted to a foremanship. His shift became the best in the plant, having a monthly labor turnover of less than 133 per cent.

Then the semi-annual reorganization shook the factory like a housewife shakes a mop. Two production men and half a dozen laboratory workers shot themselves. The police shoved the remainder of the executives into an old Ford truck and drove off into the distance.

The next morning Yusim was called into the front office. After a brief inspirational speech, the commissar in charge of the entire rubber industry gave Yusim a genuine broadcloth shirt and told him that he now headed a going concern that employed forty-four thousand workers.

At first everything went well. Tires rolled down the chutes to the sidings in an endless vulcanized stream. Two crates of inner tubes were shipped to as far away as Persia, where they excited much wondering comment. Once a week *Izvestia* ran a paragraph praising the Red Banner of Proletarian Revolution and No More Overtime Tire Factory for its efficiency and fine location. Then, without warning, the bouquets on the inter office communications system found themselves replaced by brickbats. Customers wrote in complaining that Redprotex tires either refused to hold more than a spoonful of air or else swelled up to such a height that pursuit planes had to be sent up to bring them down. Production fell further and faster than the relatives of a deceased commissar. Workers strode into Yusim's office, their faces lined with desperation and rubber particles, demanding to be transferred to the Siberian salt mines. The Commissar of Heavy Industry was heard to mutter that he feared that Yusim's health could not withstand the strain of his executive position. At that cue, the head of the entire rubber industry sent a brief note to Yusim, pointing out that Yusim had been solely responsible for all the failures in the industry. Purely as a personal favor, he was being permitted to resign and disappear. When she heard the news, Yusim's wife left him, taking the two children with her. The next time they met, his children stoned him on the streets, shouting "Menshevik Dog!" at him in their childish treble.

But the young man's courage was unbroken. He cut off the newly sprouted moustache, changed his name, and applied for his old job of sweeping up after the regular sweepers. Late at night, alone in the plant, he rummaged through the office desks, searching for some evidence to explain his downfall. Within a week he had found it. An aged production manager, tottering toward his thirty-fifth birthday, had been secretly dropping tea bricks into the rubber as it was mixed. His sole motive was jealousy of Yusim's youth. The culprit was promptly pulverized and inserted into the next batch of tires as a stabilizer. Yusim was reinstated as factory head and welcomed by a demonstration that was ordered to last a week. His wife suddenly appeared on his doorstep one morning with the two children. She was taken back, while the children privately resolved that they would never make hasty judgments again. At the Red Banner of the Proletarian Revolution and No More Overtime Tire Factory production figures promptly soared beyond the reach of graph paper.

While heavy industry, pampered by public attention, boomed, in consumer's goods there was a different story. Popular soviet economics regarded the consumer as little better than a stool pigeon, forever stirring up trouble with a childish insistence on wanting to buy something. Clothing production dropped to unheard of lows and left the more modest soviet citizens cold and embarrassed. In a country district near Sarapul trousers had not been seen for so many years that the peasants had to be compelled by military force to wear them. Only after a long campaign, which involved the annihilation of two Red Army divisions and the total detrousing of a third, did the local residents shed the kilts the textile commissariat regularly sent them and submit to wearing pants.

Satisfied that he had done everything humanly possible for the police, Azeff felt that it was time to give the country an opportunity to make use of his services as an engineer. The party, desperate for specialists, promptly assigned him to build a dam for a

power project. Azeff spent a happy six months in the open air, stalking haughtily about the construction camp, the laces of his high boots fluttering in the breeze and threatening to trip all pedestrians within a radius of six feet. He was enormously impressed by his slide rule. Whenever he felt more than two pairs of eyes gazing in his direction, he would snatch it from his pocket and begin a series of gymnastically vigorous calculations. He spared neither himself nor his workers. Every step was carefully planned. He excavated, set up his steel reinforcements, poured his concrete, and watched the first high waters of the year distribute his dam all over the river delta. Bronze dedication plates with his name on them were carried more than twenty-five miles out to sea.

Azeff was broken faster than an after dinner toothpick. The party officials decided to be lenient and give him one last chance by sending him on an absolutely hopeless mission. In the dead of night he was transferred to the Central Russian Statistical Bureau where chaos exercised control through an elaborate system of holding companies.

The nominal head of the bureau, suspicious of the growers' figures on the annual production of grass seed, was locked up in a sanitarium, counting the year's output seed by seed. Minor officials saved carfare by loafing at home instead of the office. The clerks who were left in charge managed nicely by adding an arbitrary eight per cent to the figures for the previous year and were able to spend the next eleven months brushing up on their blind-fold chess. Adding machines were pieced together by chewing gum and bits of string. Office equipment was considered to be in working order if it made a noise when struck. In some of the branch offices, zeroes and decimal points were boycotted as petty bourgeois inventions; in others, they were considered to be interchangeable. One chauvinist Ukrainian was known to have transformed the Uzbek mortality tables into a report on the progress of the hoof and mouth disease. Employees in the Armenian section had gambled away all their equipment and were

reduced to working with a set of Tartar abacusses. Fortunately, the bureau had operated for less than five years, so that its deviations from reality were still within the grasp of non-astronomical mathematics.

Azeff worked immediate wonders. Obsolete equipment was traded to a Belgian cartel in exchange for half a year's supply of erasers. Geometry was discarded because it symbolised a decadent classicism that was inimical to the best interests of socialism. Arabic numbers were avoided wherever possible because they represented subconscious Pan-Islamic tendencies. Azeff let it be known that as soon as the state became a little more firmly established there would be no more nonsense about "x" continuing to be an unknown number. Mathematical symbols could no longer plead political neutrality. They were either active participants in the building of the new society or better off dead. All numerical expressions had to fit in with the Five Year Plan or take the consequences. If 1,427 did not look like much when applied to the annual production of cheese, then a sensible statistician made it stand for a considerable increase in the local rainfall.

Azeff's axe-work in the Central Russian Statistical Bureau restored him to official favor. Those pages in his record which referred to the dam mysteriously disappeared. He was given a month's vacation and promoted to the managership of the Fifth Anniversary of the Defence of Tsaritsyn Button Factory. From the start, he sensed that practically everything could be improved. Tardiness was increasing at such a rate that the button factory was losing eight whole working days a month. Azeff announced that a concealed trap, built across the factory gate, would be set every morning at six. Tardy workers would find themselves playing an important role on the production schedule of the fat rendering plant across the way. At this period, Moscow's streetcar system was so ineffectual that it could only support itself by renting itself as subject matter to the writers for the comic weeklies. Each lonely streetcar that ventured out on the streets was filled to the roof by hundreds of workers,

jammed into a single enthusiastic mass. Hundreds more clung to every available exterior projection. At intervals, tiring of their precarious grip, these outside passengers would drop off and walk on ahead to wait for the car at the next stop. In order to avoid the trapdoor, Azeff's button makers had to spend all their spare time walking to and from work. When other factories imitated Azeff's stringent orders, the streets of Moscow were filled with hurrying throngs all night long.

The drive for industrialism did not lack its martyrs.

On the Kremlin Quay stands the heroic statue of a Young Pioneer who denounced his father for diversionism and was murdered for his pains. Azeff made the principal speech at both the funeral and the statue's dedication. Strictly speaking, young Akkady had turned his father in for drunkenness. Before the court, the old man ventured a defense that sounded hollow as an empty whisky jug. Old Porphyry pleaded that he had spent the week-end before the crime visiting a friend, the official champagne taster for the Southwestern District. Wine production had been held up by the refusal of the fermenting bacteria to cooperate with the new regime. Adequate punitive measures had to be taken. During Porphyry's stay, the entire year's output turned up for testing. The friend flung himself at his task like a true shock worker, but within a few hours he lay on the floor, toes turned up and eyes glassy. Porphyry sprang for the bunghole, and by superhuman willpower, managed to sample the last batch of wine before he too, stumbled senseless to the planking. Naturally, he was unable to return to the button factory for a week. When he finally dragged himself to work, the mineral content of his breath disorganized all the electrical equipment for blocks around.

In spite of his defence, Porphyry was shipped to Archangel for a year, to be given an opportunity to learn canal digging with his fingernails. Meanwhile, Akkady's zealotry brought him to the attention of Azeff. First he denounced sixteen fellow employees for spending too much time in the lavatory and won pro-

motion to a minor Stakhonovist rank. Then he tracked down the saboteurs who had been drying their hands on the executives' towel, and became a foreman with the privilege of smoking two cigarets a day during working hours.

Porphyry served his sentence and returned home, hypocritically pretending that he was a reformed character. On the first free day, he lured his son out into the country on a picnic. Standing on the top of a cliff, he pointed out various items of scenic interest. With a quick, clean trip that he had learned from a Kerry man who bossed his prison labor gang, he threw Akkady over the edge and into the river. An ordinary citizen would have quickly drowned, but the youth remembered his Young Pioneer ideals, held his breath, and gradually became inflated to the point where he floated ashore. Next week end, Porphyry tied his son to a suburban railroad track, but the train lagged so far behind the timetable that Akkady almost starved to death before he was found and rescued by a friendly trackwalker. Growing subtler, Porphyry enticed his son's head into a noose on the pretext that it would strengthen his neck muscles. No sooner were Akkady's feet dangling in the air than the rope, guaranteed to hold two tons by the officials of the Pskoff rope trust, snapped in two. If the intended victim had not landed on his head, his injuries might have been extremely serious. The next night, while Akkady slept, Porphyry attempted to cut his throat with a razor made by Stalin's Fiftieth Birthday Celebration Cutlery Combine. But the lethal blade only tickled. The young man smiled blissfully as he dreamed of promotion to a glorious secretaryship.

Porphyry knew that even a Young Pioneer might become suspicious at the growing series of hairbreadth escapes. He resolved on cruel, inhuman, certain measures. Every day for a week, he inserted pulverised particles of the text of Stalin's latest speech into the airholes of Akkady's black bread. A few hours past noon on the eighth day the heroic Stakhonovist breathed his last. But long after he was dead, his intestines could be heard monotonously rumbling, "Now, comrades, what does this mean? It

means, point one . . .” and so on, over and over again. Porphyry, stricken with remorse, considered suicide by the same method, but lacked courage. While Akkady’s body lay awaiting its turn in the crematorium, an attendant heard the familiar accents emerging from the corpse’s midriff and became suspicious. He notified the police. A quick search of Porphyry’s quarters revealed which of the obligatory pamphlets were missing and the case was solved. The unnatural father was apprehended, tried, and made to disappear within a week.

News of the murder naturally unleashed a campaign of terror by children against their parents. Additional laws to curb the ardor of the adolescents had to be rushed through the Supreme Soviets. Corporal punishment, given grudging legal status, arbitrarily excluded blackjacks, brass knuckles, sandbags, and clubs with a diameter of more than three inches. Indiscriminate beating without sufficient cause was frowned upon. The entire population, with the exception of unusually muscular boys, was persuaded to agree that education and not physical violence was the solution to the parent problem. In the meantime, night schools were established to teach parents manners, truthfulness, cleanliness, punctuality, and the ability to get on with other people. To divert older citizens from the bad habits that flourished on crowded city streets, weekly hiking parties were organized under the leadership of responsible Young Pioneers. Early on the morning of the free day, groups of parents could be seen cheerfully setting out for the woods, eager to learn the difference between the ruby-throated humming bird and the giant condor.

After his success at the button factory, Azeff began to be an important figure in other people’s eyes as well. He saw the road to political success stretched out ahead of him, its separate parts as interchangeable as so many hot Augusts. Lesser men might dream of power only as a means of satisfying a wild desire for fame, women, or an apartment with a private bath. Not so Azeff. He sneered at the pathetic luxuries cherished by his colleagues, all the while adjusting them about his own spare person. When

he chased women, he did so only as a matter of principle and to demonstrate his own unhesitating loyalty to the leadership.

He used to remark that as a good Bolshevik, he saw in every woman not only the tractor mechanic, the punch press operator, or the sergeant major, he saw instead the mother of a future Soviet citizen. And in the future mother of one, he trusted that he was looking at the future mother of eight. His first concession to the leadership's example drove a truck and was studying to become the operator of a cement mixer in night school. She was officially credited with being able to generate eight and a half horsepower by her own unaided strength. But when the inevitable Russian gloom settled about her bulky frame, she would pick Azeff up in one hand, and sing sad peasant songs in a resonant baritone while she bounced him around the room. During their first winter together, her moodiness increased beyond the forbearance of the furniture. Azeff bided his time, shipped his shirts out one by one, and when opportunity beckoned, he ran away. It was months before he fully recovered. A sturdy "clump, clump" on the pavement behind him at night, and he was off like a cockroach, into the nearest building. In a flash, the door was bolted and Azeff's 135 pounds were bolstering the lock with a stern resolve.

During the sessions with the psychiatrists, he took up with a short, apple cheeked opportunist who was considered a sure thing to win the All-Russian Machine Gun Target Trophy at the next maneuvers. She was as broad of shoulders as of cheek bone, and fitted into ordinary armchairs only with the greatest difficulty. They spent long intellectual evenings together while she taught him how to take a machine gun apart and put it back together blindfolded. They were very happy, in spite of the fact that Azeff was never able to sink back into a chair without dreading a sudden, painful contact with some sharp-cornered piece of ordnance. But one unhappy day on the target range, Anishka accidentally strayed within her leading rival's line of fire. No one else was near, but a safety catch had worked loose and the

fatal weapon sprayed straight ahead. If the police had any suspicions, they kept them to themselves.

Azeff gambled on one final affair of the heart before he gave up and began to take a serious interest in food. She was slim and blond and smelt as though she wasn't there, the daughter of a Tsarist professor of mathematics. Days she worked in the offices of the Commissariat of Education, decoding the secret reports that kindergarteners submitted on their teachers. At night she came home and listened to Azeff's talks of political conquest, all the while wondering what sort of line led straightest to the affections of a member of the Politburo. Azeff was convinced she admired his appearance. He even submitted a report to the secret police which shyly admitted that she loved him beyond all reason. One lunch hour, shortly thereafter, he saw her strolling in the Park of Culture and Rest with a handsome Red Cavalry Colonel. She was never seen in Moscow again. But Siberian tribesmen tell visiting anthropologists a strange legend that the bricks from the salt mines are sometimes stamped with the secret code used by kindergarteners reporting on the politics of their teachers.

As for the conspicuous perquisites of office, Azeff was careful to indulge in only the simplest sort of expensive clothing. His ordinary jacket, not daring to be that of a humble private, was designed for a master sergeant, but well cut and sewed of the finest wool available. His gleaming Russian boots were made of the skins of calves that had worried themselves to death over the success of the First Five Year Plan. After three years of wirepulling, he obtained access to the Kremlin's private store of Edgeworth smoking tobacco. At subsequent party congresses, he walked among the other delegates, happily puffing the proof of his orthodoxy into their faces. Their anguished looks more than compensated for the fact that smoking a pipe made him ill. He also acquired an apartment with two rooms, one with windows, absolute proof of his admission to the highest circles. Two summer cottages in the Crimea were kept in constant readiness for

his coming. But he retained his essentially simple tastes even when he teetered at the top of the Soviet pyramid. He liked nothing so much as a quiet afternoon stroll through the Moscow woods, accompanied only by his thoughts and half a battalion of the GPU spread out in skirmish formation.

By this time, Russian industry was organized tighter than the drumhead of a soprano tympani. But Culture might have been overlooked entirely if a member of the Orgburo hadn't acquired a protégé who had her heart set on being a prima donna. The astonished functionaries discovered that while all Russia drove toward bigness, Culture lacked even a duly accredited dictator. Russian dams were bigger, Russian traitors achieved unheard of heights of criminality, and expectant Russian mothers loomed larger in the public eye than any other in the world. But the arts seemed to have been jogging at their old pre-Bolshevik way, with less than no supervision.

To harness Pegasus to the Soviet whiffletree required a reliable party man who would submit to no nonsense from the mostly suspicious elements who wrote books and painted pictures. At the same time, it would be proper if he had been at least introduced to the finer things in life. One year, as a whim, Azeff had inserted paragraphs in his official biography recounting his youthful experiences as a piano tuner, a tinter of postcards, a call-boy in a provincial theater, and as the editor of an obituary column on a weekly newspaper. When these facts were pointed out to the Orgburo, its choice of a cultural hostler was inevitable.

There was relatively little difficulty in placing the prima donna, but the rest of Culture looked somewhat foreboding. To get his hand in, he decided to start out with something simple, like the promotion of chess. As a feeler he raised the correct proletarian slogan, "Down with chess for chess' sake!" He supervised the distribution of twenty million copies of a pamphlet which demonstrated that if the average chess player had faith in the inspired leadership of the Communist Party he could easily cram five years' play into four. All players were arbitrarily di-

vided into three categories, novices, masters, and Stakhonovist experts. The latter were expected to take a minute less for every move, win or lose. Special Stakhonovist teams were sent into districts that were playing fewer games than the quota called for. Hundreds of trained lecturers moved in on factories and farms, delivering a mass-produced speech during the lunch hour. In their talks they emphasized the essentially feudal nature of the old chess board. The miserly 64 squares and the pseudo-aristocratic 32 pieces typified a society dominated by the great landholders. "After socialism is finally achieved," they shouted from hundreds of makeshift rostrums, "the regulation board will have three hundred squares, each player will manipulate two hundred pieces, and the game will be six and one-half times as easy to play." One year, for publicity purposes, Azeff succeeded in introducing a chess players' division into the May Day parade. Five thousand Stakhonovist masters, each operating behind a chessboard slung across his middle like a cigaret girl's tray, initiated a king's pawn opening in unison as they passed before the reviewing stand. Stalin himself was deeply moved. Tears glinted on his cheeks as he muttered, "I haven't seen a checker game since I was a boy."

Seeing chess mashed into a complaisant pulp by the violent meeting of thesis and antithesis, Azeff felt he could safely turn on literature. According to custom, he began by raising a slogan, in this case, "Outstrip Tolstoy and Shakespeare!" Notices were mailed out that the collected works of every living writer were to be doubled within the next five years. Tables of contents were pumped full of water, novels burst their covers with three times as many chapters, and no play could be produced without speaking parts for 157 actors. When Azeff read that moderately fast Western typists could turn out 80 words a minute, that was set as the standard for all novelists. Non-fiction, which presumably involved research and the use of notes, could coast along at 40 words per minute.

Poetry, because it involved less of a capital investment, was the

first branch of literature to be placed on a proper production line basis. The first shop crew assembled the subject matter, wheeling Love, Honor, the Party, the Fatherland, and The Out-of-doors, around the factory floor on dollies. The next inserted the nouns. Then followed separate semi-skilled crews who hooked up the verbs, drilled holes for adverbs, welded on the preformed, machine-stamped images, fitted the dependent clauses in place, attached a separate clamp for the adjectives, and finally sprayed the whole with the gloss paint of punctuation. As the finished product moved along the conveyor belt, it was carefully inspected for intelligibility, mass-appeal, and wholesomeness. Rejected items were thrown on the scrap heap and melted down to use over again.

Azeff made possible the mass-production of novels by the invention of his Wischmeier blocks, a set of optically flat quartz plates which could measure the tolerances of the separate parts of a novel up to 1/25,000 of an inch. The separate parts, plot, characters, style, and so on, were stamped out by huge twenty ton presses. Expert craftsmen machined the smaller pieces by hand. Cheap labor, mostly untrained college girls, roosted on both sides of the assembly line. Two basic plots were furnished, one for lovers of international intrigue, the other for addicts of the domestic detective story. The first framework outlined a hypothetical war which was being waged against the Soviet Union. The hero wore the uniform of the Red Air force while the heroine scampered over the enemy landscape, directing his bombing activities by means of a flashlight. The domestic tale busied itself with the adventures of a fledgling official who was sent out to the provinces to remedy a desperate situation. He was accompanied by a far-seeing female graduate of a technical school. The plot consisted of any convenient current news item. It proceeded on the basis of initial complication, reverse sub-one, reverse sub-two (almost always accompanied by the death of a sympathetic character), uncovering dastardly plot sub-one, uncovering dastardly plot sub-two, justice triumphant, and off to the next problem.

Once a year the factories were shut down while the models were changed for the coming season. The international plot was generally left untouched, except that the name of the enemy country was altered to conform to the increasingly tense foreign situation. The subject matter of the domestic novel was altered to agree with the minutes of the last meeting of the Politburo. At first, this annual shutdown resulted in considerable hardship among the writers and other mechanics. Later on, production was staggered and yearly wages guaranteed.

Krassnovich was the brightly buffed end product of Azeff's literary dictatorship. A riveter on a construction gang, he wrote his maiden novel, *The First Twenty-Four Hours of a Turbine*, while waiting for the rivets to be heated. He mailed it in to the State Publishing House at the most fortunate possible time. In the early part of the year, the newly appointed officials had vied with each other in the speed with which they could refuse manuscripts. Now, they found themselves approaching the twelve month accounting with most of their projected output vanished with the rejection slips. Without bothering to look at the title, the reader ripped open the yard square bundle of manuscript and sent it down to the linotypists, page by page, as soon as he finished correcting the spelling. The book was published and thrown callously out on the market. The reviewers sensed that Krassnovich had talent. But they had received no official notification, and they allowed his novel to sink without a ripple. Not fifty copies had been sold when Azeff absent-mindedly pocketed it from a bookstore trough. When two committee meetings were postponed, he spent a few hours reading it. He admired everything about it, but especially the fact that it proved to him that novels were not necessarily exclusively concerned with people in love. As he later remarked on the dustcover, "Krassnovich's description of the state of mind of the powerhouse machinery is as sharply and as movingly drawn as a table of compression ratios." Seeing the opportunity to create his own Homers, Azeff set his cultural promotion machine in operation.

A minor commissar established the tone for the campaign by signing a half-column editorial in *Pravda* which praised the clarity of Krassnovich's political insight, in particular his understanding of the role of the individual stationary engineer. Next day a psychiatrist lauded his knowledge of that hinterland of the human soul which lies midway between sex and hunger. A botanist issued a list of corrections to the botanical atlas, based on Krassnovich's descriptions of the weeds that grew about the powerhouse. A mechanical engineer discussed his almost super-human awareness of stress analysis. Sales boomed. Not a party meeting passed without a carefully elaborated reference to the *First Twenty-Four Hours of a Turbine*. Shock workers were honored by being given the names of its heroes. Leaders on the way out writhed beneath the names Krassnovich had given his villains. Special tours were arranged to visit the major scenes of his novel. Party units sent committees to lay wreaths before his two leading characters, the fifth turbine from the end at the Donbas power plant, and the goodhearted and sympathetic, if not politically stable, mercury switch on the wall.

The State Publishing House, rushing to complete its schedule, forgot to tell Krassnovich that his novel had been printed. The riveter gave up hopes of a literary career and spent most of his time complaining that riveters' helpers were ten times as incompetent as they used to be. He almost fell off a girder when a delegation of Buriats and Abkhazes, resplendent in their native costumes, called on him to express their thanks and be photographed. Two days after Azeff's campaign began, the postman startled Krassnovich even more by dumping a sackful of resolutions of gratitude from sailors—which implied that a free copy of his second novel would not be thrown out of their ships' libraries—on his doorstep. Within two weeks the ex-riveter inhaled adulation as easily as he did oxygen, and exhaled complacency faster than a medium-sized carbon dioxide factory. He enjoyed being photographed with functionaries recuperating at a sanitarium, with Stakhonovists—who read his novel three times

as fast and understood it five times better than the average worker—and finally, the supreme accolade, looking lovingly at a three story portrait of Stalin. Older and almost forgotten writers wrenched a final stickful of type from posterity by exhibiting the emotions inspired in them by Krassnovich's description of filial affection among the transformers. When foreigners thought of modern Russian literature, they thought only of Krassnovich. Eventually, Krassnovich arrived at a similar opinion.

Time passed and even the policies of the Soviet Union changed. Krassnovich's ideas stayed about the same, and his second novel blithely repeated the pattern of his first. A handful of copies of *Three Weeks in a Rolling Mill* were carelessly distributed before the head office could bring its intellectual faculties to bear. Then a notice was printed in all the newspapers which pointed out certain undesirable aspects of Krassnovich's ideological background. The novelist plainly misunderstood the tempo of Soviet development. It was sheer defeatism to imply that Russian lead was not harder than bourgeois steel. He should study more—particularly the speeches of Joseph Stalin and the cultural writings of Azeff Wischmeier. He should take a job in some essential industry and become a part of the day-to-day work of the party. It was pure nonsense to imply that he had ever been a riveter, his style lacked the typical tightness and firmness that was found in the writings of all riveters. It was only too apparent that he was descended from generations of petty-bourgeois scholars and writers.

Krassnovich stopped only long enough to drop a tear on the grave of his second child and went about producing his third.

Before it could be finished, the running river of Soviet policy had shifted its channel a few more times. Krassnovich worked so hard on his new novel that he fatally neglected to read the newspapers. He shipped the manuscript of *Six Years in a Foundry* to the State Publishing House and gave a party to celebrate. A few days later a friend staggered over to compare hangovers. The apartment door stood suspiciously open. Inside the room had

been mangled by the obvious hand of the secret police. No one could mistake the way in which the more expensive *objets d'art* had been ground to the finest pulp. Krassnovich was nowhere to be found. His story, as far as the world is concerned, ends here. But Samoyeds still cherish the legend of the bearded Kamchatka timber chopper with the shoulder muscles of a riveter. In the gloomy forest depths he astonishes his companions by the literary arrangement of his grunts and groans as he swings the heavy axe.

Azeff had hoped to build new Dnieperstroys of literature, run by wind instead of water. He would have succeeded, but for the existence of the time element, which he somehow failed to abolish. To the casual eye, his second string Homers, such as Krassnovich, looked more stable than reinforced concrete, but sooner or later they tucked their epics beneath their arms and headed for the desolate Arctic, prodded by an indulgent but just government. They were never given the time to set and harden.

The classics proved to be easier to handle than contemporary literature. Azeff knew that the great texts needed only the purifying hand of proletarian culture to become almost as readable as a back number of *Pravda*. After he had worked his will on *War and Peace*, Prince Andrey died with a smile on his lips, confident of the eventual success of Russia under the Five Year Plan. For a number of years, King Claudius made his appearance in *Hamlet* wearing yellow greasepaint and answering to the name Chiang Kai Shek. About 1934 however, he acquired a bristly, absurdly clipped moustache and Polonius began to refer to him as Der Fuehrer. *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* got by relatively unscathed, except for the somewhat unexpected entrances of characters named Briand, Stresemann, and Austen Chamberlain. *Le Misanthrope* was also played as written, beyond the fact that the protagonist was called Alceste Bronstein and constantly fondled his goatee. Azeff's edition of *Pride and Prejudice* pointed out the essentially progressive nature of the sexual struggle with its implications for the electrification of Russian industry.

Literature, if not subdued at least begging for mercy, Azeff

blew the whistle for an offensive along the entire cultural front. Certain things were hunted down from the start. Minor scales, Prussian blue, knight's gambits, use of the terms "upstage" and "downstage," dactyls, and an unhealthy interest in bibliography were driven across the borders they had dared profane. And any critic foolhardy enough to preserve more than a two years' file of a cultural journal was only implementing his chances to become the center of attention at a funeral.

In painting, Azeff was shocked to discover, it was often impossible to tell whether a given picture was genuinely revolutionary in its implications, the work of a sympathetic but morally puny fellow traveller, subconsciously counter-revolutionary, or openly inciting the mad dogs of fascism, capitalism, and a higher standard of living. One landscape however, he was able to denounce as an obvious bourgeois plot to confuse the workers. Even after examining it closely, a committee composed of a meteorologist, an astronomer, and a representative of a paint factory was unable to tell whether the sun the landscape depicted was rising or setting. Modern painting was as symptomatic of the ills of society as the efficiency of modern plumbing. Cezanne, Azeff decreed as he sent half a hundred of the Frenchman's admirers back to painting structural steelwork, historically represented the rise of organic chemistry and the development of branch banking. Hence, he could teach the most to those artists directly involved in the problems of heavy industry. Renoir was to be ignored because he symbolized the eternal fleshly drive of the peasant, hardly helpful in a period of intense effort to speed factory production. Gauguin was banned because he stood for nothing but the openly brutal tactics of an expanding finance capitalism. His paintings of the notoriously *saftig* daughters of the South Seas were vicious white chauvinist distortions.

Cubism marked the death struggles of a frenetic capitalism, collapsing under the weight of its own inability to solve the essential problems of distribution and perspective. Abstraction in painting was not abstraction at all, but the poorly concealed

aesthetic manifestation of the same forces that led the fight against self-determination in the Black Belt. Regionalism had two disguises. In the Autonomous Republics it was a laudable effort to develop the artistic capacities of the long oppressed minority groups. Under capitalism of course, it was merely another attempt by the bosses and their Social-Democratic lackeys to split the unity of the working class.

Azeff denounced in kilowatt-absorbing, incandescent language those artists who frittered away their time adorning their genre painting with rickety children and their still lives with broken dishes. Realistic paintings of soviet apartment buildings were more treasonous than portraits which showed Stalin in the grip of some fundamental emotion. True socialist realism, the domestic variety, was dedicated to the principle of promoting the good, the beautiful, and the occasionally true. It went completely out of bounds when it concerned itself with the unrenovated districts of soviet cities or with any concrete aspects of the general standard of living. Naturalism had been devised for the sole purpose of holding up the mirror to bourgeois society. If there was any ugliness in the Russian social structure, it was hardly the business of a state supported artist to call attention to it. In the highest sense, socialist realism meant pearly toothed parachute jumpers, cable-necked Stakhonovists, Red Army commanders who looked like Clark Gable on a good day.

In sculpture, Azeff eventually found it necessary to point out that the truly creative mind would vary its approach, and portray Stalin as a baby, Stalin as an adolescent, Stalin standing up, Stalin sitting down, as well as the more standard man of granite bust. Sculptors, he encouragingly added, always played a leading role in the struggles of any class to attain power. History was crowded with instances where ponderous statues had tipped over on unpopular public figures, ending their iniquitous careers in a cloud of marble dust and a puddle of protein. The heroic statues of Thorwaldsen had sealed the doom of the feudal lords. The nudes of Powers, beloved of nineteenth century busi-

ness men, had marked the rise of militant trade unions. It was the business of Soviet sculptors to provide similar inspiration, memorials for the market place, enjoyment for the parlor table.

To show who called the tune in Russian music, Azeff raised the resounding slogan, "Down with rotten liberalism with its bourgeois dissonances and inimical class theories." While investigations were carried on to show what the slogan meant, Azeff felt its very sonorousness would hold his enemies for a while. To let people know who was boss, he suddenly discovered that the leading Soviet composer was remarkable for both his "decadent bourgeois formalism" and his "leftist stress of ugliness." The musician in question was guilty of writing a second symphony whose main theme could not possibly be whistled by the average worker. The only hummable motif was a dull description of the second shift beginning work at the foundry. To add emphasis to his criticism, Azeff mailed the composer one-way passage to a desolate Asiatic desert. There he was instructed to escort an untuned, jangling piano from one nomad camp to another, giving lessons to the music-hating Mohammedan children. It was a long time before there were any more applicants for the job of leading Soviet composer.

When the second leading Soviet composer made the mistake of writing his first symphony, he was transferred to the Ural mountains to learn how to become a shipping clerk. Azeff himself pointed out that his music offered no definite program for the building of socialism. His orchestration revealed a completely inadequate knowledge of the needs of Russian metallurgy. Not a single bar described the dawning of class consciousness in the mind of the backward worker. His passages for woodwinds cravenly avoided the problem of strengthening the leading cadres of the party. And his petty-bourgeois reliance on the brass section conclusively demonstrated his ignorance of the fact that life had become more joyous.

While Azeff scampered over the entire face of Russian culture like a window washer on a skyscraper, strange things were hap-

pening in the department of literary scholarship. A group of Bostonians who were united around the single proposition that Francis Bacon wrote the plays attributed to William Shakespeare sent a missionary to Russia, at considerable personal expense. By pretending that he was interested in tracing down absolute proof that Shakespeare was actually a Russian baby who had been kidnapped by British capitalists, their emissary managed to strike up a warm friendship with a junior instructor in the department of English and Other Romance Languages at the University of Moscow. After much devious maneuvering, in which a blond Montenegrin beauty played a sordid role, the instructor became fully convinced of Bacon's ability to write blank verse. Wires were attached to the right people and carefully pulled. Within a month Azeff had been won over. Within two months, Stalin was seen in public carrying a copy of *The Advancement of Learning*.

Now operating under a full head of his own steam, the instructor launched a vicious attack on the adventuristic terrorism of those who maintained that Shakespeare had written his own plays. Bacon was obviously the representative of the rising bourgeoisie, the healthy, alert, commercial, codifying, legalizing, juror-bribing middle class. Shakespeare symbolized the deer-stealing, horse-holding, lumpen proletarian theater hangers-on, the degenerate dregs of a dying feudalism. A few wilful and stubborn scholars who saw their literary mining claims undergo a sudden devaluation attempted to put up a fight. Their cause was hopeless from the start. A lunatic fringe of opportunists, left and right, raised standards supporting the claims of Oxford, Southampton, and Essex to the rightful reputation of Verulam. They died like Mayflies when their race was run, often before they were able to reach the appendices of their theses. Advancing over the detached heads of his predecessors, the former instructor rose until he was directing all of Russian literary scholarship from a series of pushbuttons on his desk edge. His followers organized themselves into a new school which singlemindedly de-

voted itself to ferreting out the real authors of the classics. The foundations of proletarian literature itself were traced back beyond Homer, who in real life had been nothing more than the student body of a fashionable Greek finishing school. The learned quarterlies confined themselves to running articles bearing such titles as "Who Was Camoens?", "What About Lope de Vega?", and "The Real Ariosto Unmasked." Within a few issues, most of the great literary figures had been exposed many times over.

"Whowasism," as the new theory of scholarship was called, trampled joyously on the faces of all opponents for almost a year. Then Azeff was unexpectedly shifted to the Academy of Sciences where a strong hand was needed. The new cultural dictator, but two days previous firing a freight engine, felt that this wholesale questioning of established literary authority could not help but be politically unsettling. He struck immediately when he heard that several scholars were ready to publish articles which proved that Karl Marx was really (1) a Buddhist priest, (2) the rightful claimant to the Stuart throne, (3) the inventor of the tin can. The reactionary "Theywereists" came out of their hiding places and lighted their celebrating banquets with the gasoline-steeped corpses of the "Whowasists." The former instructor escaped. To-day he is employed as the assistant bacteriologist in the health department at Chita, where the climate is better than might be expected.

Azeff, as he transferred his twitching gaze to science, felt he had done as much for the arts as an honest man could. Under his administration, art had developed to a point where a discussion about form and content became almost as fatal as an abstaining vote at a party convention. A sidelong glance at the guest of honor at a literary tea, something less than frantic enthusiasm when confronted with Budyenny's use of the subjunctive, and the anarchistic skeptic had already donned the simple and severe garments of an enemy of the people.

The Academy of Sciences, whose steering wheel was so sud-

denly thrust into Azeff's hands, was the most generally admired intellectual vehicle in Russia. It boasted of no permanent membership lists and relied instead on a wall that was covered with slots in which the names of the day's Academicians could be readily inserted. Most of its members looked upon it not as the crowning honor to a successful career but only as a passing episode between the cradle and the tomb. Traditionally, the Academy was composed of practical men. Citizens with a bent for theory were considered amply compensated if they kept out of jail.

Azeff had been called in because the government suspected that one or two aspects of soviet science definitely lacked perfection. In particular, there had been considerable loose talk about "objectivity" and "scientific method," terms which were suspected to be code signals arranging for the return of Russia to the Romanoffs.

During Azeff's first day in office, "objectivity" and "scientific method" came flying out the door, followed by a statistically adequate sample of the laboratory personnel. Then he set up principles for soviet science that compare favorably with the ethical standards of those Western research chemists who compound the formulas for both celluloid collars and poison gas, and are willing to be regarded as social benefactors for the sake of the collars.

In Russian science there was to be no nagging about overspecialization. Each scientist desperately focussed his attention on the fewest possible phenomena and tried to avoid looking interested in anything a police officer might think was none of his business. Claustrophobes lasted less than a week. One unhappy biologist confined himself to the study of a single paramecium. He kept his project manageable by destroying half the product of every fission. A stool pigeon, envious of his corner laboratory, sent an anonymous note to the Biological Institute officials intimating that relatives of this particular paramecium were found only at Alma Ata, the Prinkipo Islands, a certain Norwegian rural district, a suburb of Mexico City named Coyoacan, and

only in conjunction with a goateed, bespectacled ex-soldier whose name it would be wiser not to mention. As a matter of fact, the stool pigeon was honestly mistaken, but the safety of the state did not permit holding up the execution until a thorough investigation could be made.

Azeff also sponsored the publication of the New Russia's first official psychiatric survey. This document revealed that Bolshevism had so changed the very structure of human nature that the amino-acids, famed chemical building blocks of the body, no longer recognized each other. Most of the old psychoses, engendered by the false social relationships of Tsarism, were disappearing. The dissolving of the family as an economic unit—up to the time it was decided to restore the family as an economic unit—eliminated much of the basis for family tension. Infants brought up in a creche had few opportunities for coming into conflict with their parents. If, of course, they disobeyed their nurses or howled at the harshness of their blankets, that was political criticism, and to be treated in quite another way.

Manic-depressive psychoses had vastly decreased, to be replaced by a generalized feeling of gloom that lightened only when world capitalism encountered a new and more blood-curdling crisis. But paranoia was the psychic characteristic that set the soviet citizen apart from the half-hearted neurotics that flourished in the West. Every Russian was convinced that every foreigner was looking sideways at the soviets in a way that could only be described as peculiar. Electronic discharges and radio waves generated by a mysterious group referred to only as "Them" were forever on the verge of destroying all the dry land between the Baltic and the Sea of Okhotsk. All the Evil Eyes of Europe were focussed on a known spot in the Kremlin courtyard. Only the heroic exertions of Comrade Stalin prevented Russia from being engulfed by a concerted attack of the invisible beings of the land and air, and the monsters of the deep.

Completely characteristic of the new era were the soviet alcoholics, the pitiful remnants of the noble army that had blos-

somed under the Tsarist liquor monopoly. Their three day drinking bouts were no longer hampered by the persecution of multi-colored snakes and devils. Their delirium tremens were as thoroughly standardized as local comments on world politics. All the first day they imagined that they were about to follow the arc described by a falling production curve off the edge of a mile high cliff. The second day they whimpered before the charge of an army of tractors that spouted flame and hurled loose parts with deadly accuracy at their unprotected victims. On the final day, the unhappy drinker sank into oblivion surrounded by the contorted faces of shock brigaders who screamed "Faster! Faster!" at him as he was forced to tend first one, then two, then a whole factory full of knitting machines.

Schizophrenics, squatting in their corners, no longer heard the voice of the God of the Holy Synod accusing them of unmentionable crimes. In their dreams they faced one interminable trial before factory committees, trying desperately to refute conclusive proof of their careers as traitors and saboteurs. Asylums, once crowded with self-elected Romanoffs and Sultans, were now populated solely by great party leaders and engineers. High on a hill overlooking the Volga, guarded night and day by the secret police, lived in strictest confinement a sacrilegious wretch who was convinced that he was Stalin. Ordinarily, he would have been shot without trial, but his jailers wondered if there were not some truth in his ravings.

The psychiatric survey closed on a triumphant note. Under socialism, most of the factors promoting psychic antagonism between the sexes would be eliminated. Under communism, all except the most pleasant physical differences between the sexes would disappear.

Azeff waged a relentless struggle against the Freudian freebooters in soviet psychology. The Bolshevik animosity against Freudians was soundly based on a competitive hatred of any other intellectual system that could look upon a single given fact from two diametrically opposed points of view. Selected com-

rades, whose tongues were first torn out and whose writing paper was rationed, were delegated to study Freud and find out if the Communist Party was missing any tricks. Their reports convinced Azeff that it would be extremely simple to build up Stalin to a point where he could take over power as the father image. The party itself could be mustered in as a combination of the Universal Earth Mother and Venus Genetrix. While Stalin stalked about, scowling and gobbling his children, the party offered the all-embracing arms of the mother, the broad, capacious bosom upon which the wandering intellectual could hang his hat.

Manipulating Freudian psychology also permitted a tighter grip upon the subconscious of the Russian people. By conducting a house-to-house check up, it was possible to strangle class enemies long before their plotting reached the conscious stage. Every night the police raided randomly selected apartment buildings. Any citizen discovered in a cold sweat was automatically judged to be guilty of treason and taken off to the waiting wagon. Certain dreams, throttling one's father, kicking one's mother in the stomach were on the permanent forbidden list. But the analyses of other dreams changed with the arrival of every new issue of *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis* and the casual conversations in the Politburo. Dreaming of cabbages on Tuesday night might entitle the dreamer to a minor decoration and a week's vacation for his services in the defense of the Fatherland. By Thursday night, the objective situation might have changed to the point where such a dream heralded a one-way ticket to a concentration camp for apprentice canal diggers. Just what means the party used to pry into the dreams of its citizens every night, Azeff never disclosed. But not a single man in Russia doubted that it could.

Under Azeff's direction, Soviet physicians began their first tentative experiments with the stimulating properties inherent in Stalin's name. Most spectacular were the cases in which the regulated use of Stalin's name permitted superior individuals to

outdo themselves. Mountain climbers chased each other up the highest peaks and leapt the broadest chasms, cheerfully screaming, "Stalin! Stalin!" at each other all the while. Rationed over a period of months and preserved in rancid whale oil, Stalin's name enabled Arctic explorers to sorrow less over their separation from civilization. Three-tenths of a second were lopped off the record for the hundred meters dash, twenty-five additional kilos added to the weight-lifting marks by suddenly shouting "Stalin!" at the contestants just as they were putting forward their best efforts. Because of this use of the magic name in athletics, Russia was never invited to participate in the Olympic Games. Capitalist opponents feared what they presumptuously labelled "unfair competition" which was merely an underhanded way of acknowledging the boundless love of the Russian masses for the best leader of the workers.

In genetics, Azeff smashed the White-Guardist Darwinians and their allies who insisted that because Stalinism was an acquired characteristic, it could never be inherited. He stressed the official doctrine that becoming a Stalinist changed the character of the germ plasm irreversibly. All scientists with the interests of the proletariat at heart admitted that Stalinism had been buried in the human chromosomes at least since Mousterian times, waiting only the happy influence of Bolshevism before it could come to a glorious fruition. It was true that many individuals had seemed to acquire Stalinism only during their own lifetimes. Nevertheless, it had better be proved to be congenital or there would be trouble for the heirs.

In anthropology, practically everything had to be scraped off by the blowtorch of the dialectic. Russia distinguished between her sons on a basis less accidental than the color of their skins, more precise and definite than the blood which had been spilt on German battlefields for more years than the average man cared to think about. By using fundamental measurements of people's state of mind, in particular that of their political consciousness, all human beings could be divided by the Soviet anthropologist

into three main groups. Inevitably, the highest and best group was composed of Communists.

First among the Communists were the activists, the leaders, garbed in a popular admiration more tangible than a double-breasted business suit with two pair of pants. Physically, they were of average height, and so profoundly intellectual they were able to block their hats on square shaped forms. Their eyes, by actual tests, could penetrate 2 feet 11 inches of wood, 8½ inches of ferro-concrete, or the tightly massed skulls of any leading party committee. Silent, they seemed as pregnant and inscrutable as an equivalent number of cigarstore Indians. Conversationally, they were more eloquent than a flat wheel on a freight car. Possessed of a fabulous physical endurance, they seldom needed more sleep than that which could be snatched during the speeches at a party convention. They lived for months on end on a handful of grapes and a nibble at the current political literature. In their rare repose, they gave off a continual humming sound, which resembled the purring of a contented dynamo or a well-oiled majority caucus in operation. In action, they perspired a particularly fine quality of aviation gasoline, which flickered in little blue flames all over the surface of their skins.

In second rank among the Communists stood the great theoreticians, primarily characterized by a looseness of the vocabulary and a costiveness of ideas. Due to their constant association with the activists, nature had mercifully made their skins two to three inches thicker than those of ordinary mortals. In walking, they were preceded by a wheelbarrow which relieved them of the burden imposed by their monumental thinking apparatus. The wheelbarrow also bore the briefcase which contained the three different, internally consistent points of view on every conceivable topic, just in case the audience demanded something impromptu.

Last in the highest group came the ordinary party members, the workers in the mine, the mill, and the dentist's office. They were easily recognizable because of their conspicuous infestation

with Mexican jumping beans. Pound for pound, cell for cell, they generated and dissipated more energy than any other process known to science, not excepting the still unplumbed atomic sources. They spent their full twenty-four hours every day obeying the voice of History, concretized by the directives of the party. They were more full of personal sacrifice than a backyard crammed with ancient Hebrew tabernacles. As regulation equipment, they staggered about loaded down by the day's output of the party press and a faith that kept the Carpathian mountains not knowing where they would wake up next. They thrived on mass meetings, composing remarkably uniform resolutions, and expectorating into the wind as non-party elements passed by. Their weekly ration of words was supplied in a standard vocabulary and turned on and off in a pipeline running from the central pumping station. If the Communists were not destined to conquer the earth, at least they intended to give the insects a good run for their money.

The second of the three main groups was composed of that Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde of world politics, the ordinary worker. Doctor Jekyll appeared in public, bronzed, superbly muscular, with more interesting bulges than a female movie star. Casually as a pipe wrench, he dandled the future of humanity in his two strong hands. Both his eyes were permanently fixed on the organizational structure of the Communist Party, both his legs were achingly tensed to jump with the slightest flicker of a leading activist's forefinger. Mr. Hyde snivelled in the background, cringing with a hideous pleasure beneath the lashes of the bosses and their Social-Democratic allies. He raised trembling, nicotine stained fingers to hide the mark of the stool pigeon indelibly stamped upon his brow. Doctor Jekyll followed the party's line more consistently than he did his nose. Mr. Hyde took an unnecessarily fiendish pleasure in running counter to the wishes of the central committee, squandering his meager wages on automobiles, home study courses, and a small home in the suburbs.

The third and lowest class, as conglomerate as a mud puddle, was composed of the known enemies of the people. Squatting loathsomely in the bottommost level of the primordial ooze, mashed well-nigh flat by the accumulated criminality that swirled above them, cowered the Trotskyites, since the days of the aurochs the lowest of all God's creatures. They served no good purpose but to inspire a desultory but spurtingly vicious feud among the already embattled Soviet geneticists. One school went to its death insisting that the Trotskyites were the degenerate descendants of a subnormal brother of a Peking Man named Om. Others, as the flames lapped about them, steadfastly maintained that the Trotskyite divergence from the human family tree occurred at least as far back as the level of the tarsier. But both the quick and the dead agreed that the existence of the Trotskyites was conclusive proof of the falseness of Darwinism, for as far as anybody knew there had never been any evolution among them.

By this time, Azeff symbolized the intellectual and cultural glories of the new Russia to the outside world. When the distinguished foreign visitors arrived, it was Azeff who had to keep their eyes straining toward future stars while he kept their feet out of present gutters. Most of these visitors, in spite of Azeff's most strenuous efforts at tactful blandness, became afflicted with queer delusions. After the distinguished guest had gorged himself at a series of banquets and then walked out on the streets among the lean local citizenry, he had an uneasy feeling that passers-by were estimating how many stews he would make, butchered and boned.

Azeff's only serious mishap as statesman, guide, philosopher and friend, took place in connection with the triumphal Russian tour of Thorlefsen Hammargrensted, the world famous Norwegian authority on the West Hamitic dialects of the Sahara. His visit had been a fortunate accident. Some months previous, the great scholar had spent a long weekend, drinking toasts with a group of his cronies at his village tavern. By early Sunday

morning they had exhausted the ordinary excuses for tilting the mug, the King, the Storting, the local mayor, the Climate, Norwegian girls, the Seven Arts, one after another, the Sciences, severally considered. Then the happy drinkers began to work around the map of Europe, drinking fellowship to each country. When they came to Russia, it was Hammargrensted's turn to propose the toast. This he did with great eclat and many wise saws from the West Hamitic, ending by raising his mug and bellowing, "To the Soviet Union, somebody's fatherland, and all the anonymous republics!" Then, with a final convulsive effort, he managed to fall flat on his face and shattered his two remaining upper incisors.

The bartender was a part-time operative of the GPU. He saw to it that news of Hammargrensted's conversion was immediately wigwagged Moscow-wards by a string of local Young Pioneers, scattered across the fiords like so many stunted telephone poles. Within a week the Soviet Ambassador called on Hammargrensted. He informed the somewhat startled scholar that the Autonomous Republics were almost hysterically enthusiastic over the twenty-volume *Handy Dictionary of West Hamitic for Natives of Telemark*. Enormous quantities of the sets had been distributed wherever it was felt they would do the most good, enlightening a backward race, providing an hour's amusement, or keeping a door from slamming in the wind. Because of a regrettable law that prohibited the export of hard cash, Hammargrensted had his choice of two ways of getting at his royalties. The State Publishing House was pleased to offer him a month's tour of Russia with all expenses, including refreshments, paid. Or else, the ambassador rummaged in his briefcase for a sample card, he was offered a genuine hand-embroidered Russian blouse, said to have belonged at one time to a prince. Hammargrensted drained his glass slowly and decided in favor of the tour. He seemed to remember having an extra shirt.

In Russia, Hammargrensted patted thousands of school children on the head with a careless, addlepatting hand and smiled

affably whenever the interpreter seemed about to open another bottle. Thousands flocked to hear his speeches defending the West Hamitic dialects from the sneers of the bourgeois gangsters who were the sole remaining supporters of the study of East Hamitic. An entire generation of philologists grew up convinced that "Skoal" was the Norwegian word for "Comrade." Azeff congratulated himself on Hammargrensted's solid, photogenic figure. Female gymnasium students, a herd of prize dairy cows, or a gigantic distillery aroused the same pleased wonder in his eyes, the same thirsty tongue curling in anticipation over one corner of the dry lips.

There were uneasy moments, of course. When Hammargrensted first saw the frozen Neva, he burst into uncontrolled, disappointed sobbing. It was almost half an hour before bystanders discovered that the scholar had spent a lifetime yearning to see Florence's renowned Arno. Now when he finally reached its shores, it had to be frozen over. During a tour of the Hermitage, he suddenly stopped, sat down on a bench, and refused to budge until they brought him the Venus de Milo, the only thing in this snail-eating country he really cared to see. The situation threatened to be serious. But Azeff tried persuasion and tact. Eventually, Hammargrensted cheered up to the point where he graciously accepted a drink, and the tour proceeded.

On his return to Norway, Hammargrensted was surprised to find himself embarked on a speaking tour, describing the wonders of the Soviet Union to sympathetic members of the middle class. He was further surprised, after his third lecture, to discover that he had somehow organized a Society of Friends of the Soviet Union, bolstered on one side by a group of fairly shady friends of the friends of the Soviet Union and on the other by a dark-complected GPU agent named Axelrod. Hundreds of avid lecture addicts joined up, eager to take some of the credit for soviet progress and to express their appreciation of the good fortune that enabled them to live elsewhere. Word was passed down the Comintern that the objective situation now called for vast

public demonstrations in favor of Thorlefsen Hammargrensted and the West Hamitic dialects. Whenever the great scholar went for a walk—an interesting procedure in itself—party members suddenly appeared from around corners and followed him lovingly with their eyes. His popularity increased to theoretically impossible heights. At one time, there were fifty per cent more students of West Hamitic than there were people who spoke it as their native tongue. The Supreme Soviet even considered making it the third official language in each of the republics, coequal with Russian and the local speech.

Such an idyll could not last forever. One night, at a crowded meeting in Oslo, a police spy sneeringly interrupted Hammargrensted's speech to ask, "Do you expect us to believe that everything is absolutely perfect in Russia, that nothing is wrong?"

Hammargrensted's throat was dry, and it took almost five minutes before he could clear it and answer, "Yes, everything is absolutely perfect."

Thirty seconds would have been bad enough, one minute was treason inside Russia proper, but five minutes delay was rampant counter revolution, pure and subsidized from the outside.

As soon as the Kremlin received official notice of Hammargrensted's defection, Azeff sprang into action. Within six hours, the Norse scholar's portraits had been torn down from their places of honor inside the workers' clubhouses. All remaining sets of his dictionary were put aside to fire bathhouses as soon as the bathhouses were built. The study of West Hamitic was decreed to be an invention of the most subtle minds of world capitalism, working in unison. The entire West Hamitic faculty at the University of Moscow disappeared between two and three one Wednesday morning, leaving nothing behind but a few unidentifiable blood stains. An unsigned editorial in *Pravda*, bearing the unmistakable marks of Azeff's trenchant style, pointed out that Hammargrensted's private life had been one of the most noisome septic tanks in all Europe. His incessant drinking, unknown to the heirs of Lenin until that very moment, was but a

shabby mask for the opium habit. Undisputed documents had been discovered which proved that he was an important item on the secret police budgets of 11½ foreign countries—the one-half was somewhere in the Balkans—and writing his memoirs at the instigation of three more. For many years he had surreptitiously served as the honorary vice-president of two of the most powerful emigré societies, the International Former Grand Dukes and Hod Carriers' Helpers Protective Association and the malodorous Moscow City Manager Committee. He was the chief agent of a vast conspiracy which plotted to overthrow and possibly damage Stalin, exhume the Romanoffs, and re-establish heavy industry. The GPU had been in possession of this information for several years and was merely waiting for the criminal to tip his hand.

Back in Tromsø, marauding bands of Communists wrote some of the more elemental obscene words on Hammargrensted's door. More sensitive, but equally revolutionary spirits made a point of vomiting dramatically into gutters as he passed by. That hero, when he was informed of his sudden, irreparable disgrace, swallowed automatically and muttered, "My better judgment told me to take the shirt instead."

Heartsick at the treachery of the Norwegian, and publicly near a breakdown from overwork, Azeff retired to the country to assuage his grief. Thinking to recall his attention to something useful the Central Committee sent him a brief note, suggesting, while he recuperated, that he do something about Soviet criminal law. Dully, and without real interest, Azeff fixed his twitching gaze in the indicated direction. To his immediate amazement, on the spot where the official map announced that order reigned, he found something that would have required years of supervised calisthenics and diet to be built up to the status of a first class chaos. In a flash, he was off down the trail of inefficiency and treason, pausing only briefly every half mile to bay exultantly. First, he was deeply shocked to discover that the relatives of convicted criminals were treated in a hit or miss fashion.

Penalties were arbitrary and inadequate, and more often than not, second and third cousins escaped scot free. Azeff proposed a tariff of graded punishments which made consanguinity seem even bloodier than it sounded. Wives, children, and mistresses of criminals were punished equally with the condemned. Decreasing punishments were ladled out to an established hierarchy of blood kin. Parents were next on the list to suffer, then came uncles, aunts, cousins, first, second and third, adopted children, neighbors, neighbors' relatives, and passers-by with the same blood type. To temper justice with mercy, Azeff also wrote a memorandum, later accepted as official procedure, which abolished the death penalty for all soviet citizens less than six years old.

But all of his activities, cultural, legal, and whatnot, were incidental to Azeff's overwhelming interest in building up the party itself. Singlemindedly as a cooper moving around a barrel, he dedicated himself to tightening the reputation of the party until it could replace a selected list of 97 amusements, institutions, comforts, luxuries, and occupations in the minds of its members. For orphans, it was a substitute for family life. The ungodly were pleased at the way it monopolized their religious emotions. And many a minor functionary, whirling around in his schedule of committee meetings like a squirrel in a cage, confused it with the yearning for a quiet room of one's own. Once a few additional simple problems were solved, Azeff felt sure that it could assume the role played by Beethoven's symphonies and haircuts in the life of the average man.

Naturally, such an accredited agency of the supernatural as the party was compelled to be extremely strict with its members. Any comrade who asked to have a party resolution read over twice was expelled before the boos and hisses of the rest of the comrades died down. Asking to have a resolution repeated was plainly akin to questioning it. Questioning anything the Party did came perilously close to the boundary of doubting it. Doubting it faded into the outermost wards of denying it. Denying

what the party said was considered by the Commissariat of Public Health to be fatal in from 91 to 98 per cent of the cases.

However, a genuine party member, certified at the factory and with the head man's signature glowing on his label, could not rest on the meager laurels of agreeing with the party leadership once the leadership's decisions were made known. If he were a really sincere Bolshevik, he would be able to anticipate any shifts in party policy by about thirty seconds. Any more of a lead was unhealthy, any less laid him open to the suspicion of being a laggard.

The party, although everybody named in the indictment strenuously objected, did resemble some of the more exquisitely spiritual orders of the Catholic Church. Monks foreswore the world and wealth, but in addition, a true Bolshevik took the vow of mental poverty. A control commission gave each member a general opinion test every six months. Whenever a comrade became conspicuously attached to any ideas not on the current distribution list, he was compelled to recant them publicly and further disciplined. That is, he was forbidden to make speeches, write resolutions, hand out leaflets, or argue about the party line with outsiders, for a period not to exceed one year.

The Communists continued their opposition to the Catholic Church mainly because of a well-founded contempt for the doctrine of papal infallibility. "In Russia," they snorted, "we have an infallibility that really works, and we don't have to have it propped up by any nonsense about *ex cathedra*, either. All we need is 'Dateline, Moscow.'"

During his enforced vacation, Azeff realized that he was not merely an activist, a man who had to be doing something to society because his glands were doing something to him. If Marxism had confessed to possessing a metaphysics his contributions to a theoretical understanding of the Marxist metaphysics would have been enormous. Bourgeois logic merely increased his natural tendency toward peptic ulcer. Azeff felt that a slavery to ideas was unworthy a man who already had connections with a

sound political party. As for facts, a true Communist was contemptuous of them when they were genuine and only moderately interested when they were false. The party itself, given a little more experience, would soon be turning out facts that were indistinguishable from the genuine item, unless they were accidentally left outside all night in the rain. Furthermore, facts, like individuals and ideas could be expelled from the party if they broke discipline. Individuals of course were the only ones that could be expelled from the party and then buried, which made them especially handy to have around.

Words, like facts, were only symbols of something else, and their value fluctuated faster than that of a fullhouse in a poker hand with eight wild cards. Proud, immutable definitions that started out in life with rigid morals generally came to a bad end. They wound up their careers eking out a miserable hall bedroom living, meaning whatever the party thought they ought to mean. A man with proper credentials could call an opponent a petty-bourgeois opportunist or a police spy, depending upon which the Central Committee thought sounded most damning at the time. The context of every word played a decisive part in its meaning, not only the immediately surrounding phrases but the speaker's health, the humidity in the hall, the world political situation and the salient childhood experiences of the members of the audience.

Because of the intense political life of the Russians, political standards necessarily superseded all others. Political illiteracy supplanted and was much worse than the statistically more numerous kind. Political credulousness gave former confidence men an opportunity to become experts on international affairs. According to the GPU, political pyorrhea was epidemic among grumblers. Enemies of the state could be identified in the dark by their political halitosis. Advocates of alliances with dissident labor groups were immediately characterized as political adulterers and their trousers thrown down the stairs after them.

In the beginning, the party line changed only at great inter-

vals, measurable by a calendar or an almanac. But as the tempo of industrialization speeded up, it began to change every month, then every week. After each new advance in machine tool production, the party line changed faster. Toward the end, people began to stay up all night, rearranging their ideas as the hours of darkness wore on, rather than running the risk of waking in a completely unfamiliar world.

In a private letter to a foreign sympathizer who complained that it would be easier to cling to the Soviet bandwagon if it were not always abruptly turning corners, Azeff admitted that the history of party policy might not always best be characterized by a straight line. In extenuation, he pleaded that the temporary weaknesses engendered by such successive shifts were more than compensated for by the permanentness which marked each new policy as soon as it was adopted.

Azeff, while studying party problems, noted surprisedly that the rank and file found genuine party leaders harder to identify than an old friend who has just shaved off his beard. At dusk or in the dim grey before sunrise, even experts found it almost impossible to distinguish between the best leaders of the working class and run of the mill petty-bourgeois scum. Some simple, safe, cheap and effective method had to be devised to make sure the sheep could tell the sheepdogs from the wolves. In a long memorandum, Azeff offered the party leaders a revised version of his scheme for creating great novelists, this time intended for the benefit of political genius. As it finally worked out, the beginning of each buildup was entrusted to the apprentices in the secret police, the anonymous hundred thousands who were in charge of starting the cheering at mass meetings. They circulated among street crowds and inserted the name of the lucky man into their conversations, accidentally if possible, by brute force if necessary. Streetcars and park benches were littered with police agents who struck up an acquaintance with their neighbors by coughing conspicuously and then muttering, casual as the Grand Canyon, "I hear Comrade Wutsky is doing a great

job in the flour mill at Pinsk." When the intelligent soviet citizen heard these gambits three times in one day, he shuttered and bolted his windows, dusted off the Welcome mat, and sat back to witness the change in the leadership.

Then, following Azeff's directives, random paragraphs began to appear in the newspapers, noting that a Caspian fishermen's local or a unit of Turkmen donkey drivers had recently passed resolutions praising Comrade Wutsky and themselves for the enormous strides made by socialism within the past week. Editorial writers commented on these spontaneous examples of popular enthusiasm, citing them as added proof of the sound political instinct of the masses.

In response to a freshet of letters signed "Old Subscriber" and "A Loyal Georgian" the newspapers began to publish intimate sketches of "Wutsky at Home," "Wutsky at the Mill," "Wutsky on Vacation," "Wutsky Faces Life's Problems Whole." Picture magazines featured foggy halftones of Wutsky at his desk, overshadowed by a something more than monumental bust of Stalin. Or else he was caught at his ease in the park embracing a couple of children the photographer rented from a nearby orphans' home. Eight or nine of the more exciting adventure stories from the GPU's file were selected to become a part of the general folklore, with Wutsky's name inserted for that of the previous hero. The anonymous hundred thousands, their voices breaking at exactly the same point in each recital, told how he had walked a thousand miles in his carpet slippers over the frozen tundra in order to learn how to read Stalin's *Foundations of Leninism*. Lulls in committee meetings were taken up by retelling his heroic exploits with a broken machinegun and a handful of paper wads against a battalion of White Guards, the corpses increasing and the number of wads decreasing with each version. During the lunch hour, foremen entertained their crews by describing how Wutsky had tripled the production of a collective farm with no more assistance than an electrified fence to keep the farmers in, and a forty foot rawhide whip to point out their

defects. Dramatized by paid-by-the-hour playwrights, hacked into bas-reliefs by sculptors, splashed over ceilings by muralists, Comrade Wutsky fought his way into the Russian mind and pitched his tent by the stream of consciousness.

Then he received the final certificate of political genius. Lesser speakers at conventions prefaced their remarks by beginning, "As Comrade Wutsky has so wisely said, 'If winter comes, spring is practically inevitable.'" Then they felt free to sail straight ahead into a discussion of the unaccountable lag in medium-sized boiler production, the state of the Russian short story, or the contents of the latest letter from Harry Pollitt. And whenever Wutsky gave his personal support to a rainstorm by saying, "At least this is good for the crops," the party press ran forty-four point headlines.

Azeff, himself, knew too well how quickly a leader might be broken. If one of his colleagues neglected to return a public greeting, by nightfall not even telephone operators would reply to his timid efforts at conversation.

The Russian calendar galloped into the 1930's a proud six months ahead of its capitalist rivals. Society was stratifying like a well made parfait. Floating in a thin film on the surface, hogging most of the available ultra-violet rays, were the higher party officials. Almost level with them, boasting an imposingly low specific gravity of their own, bobbed the army officers. The latter had become a haughty caste apart, more suspicious of innovation and outsiders than inhabitants of the smoking room of the Union League Club. Their daughters married other officers, their sons, other officer's daughters. A clerk in a luxury store could hint, "These are good handkerchiefs, I just sold three to an artillery colonel yesterday," and the goods were snapped up unhesitatingly. In the trade, caviar was called "general staff buckshot" and night clubs masqueraded as "field headquarters." Expensive cigars came in two grades, "Rothschilds" good enough for ordinary festivities, and the worth-their-weight-in-tool-and-die-machinery brand called "Field Marshals."

Fashions and manners trickled down from the top on the parched and eagerly imitative masses. Each major political leader was imitated down to his least gesture, his ultimate idiosyncrasy. Physical details reappeared faithfully in his immediate staff, the carefully cultivated cowlicks—nature could be assisted by a good wigmaker—the imitation bunion bulge on the left boot, the weary belt that waged a losing battle with the expanding stomach. Radek's circle spent entire seasons with one ear pressed close to the ground, straining after rumors. Members of Yagoda's clique were easily recognized by the furrowed brows that suggested the professional sniffer after leaky gas mains. In public places they whirled about like journeymen dervishes, fixing each suspiciously empty corner with a gaze, which if it could have been marketed, would soon have driven all the X ray machines out of business.

Fashions dated fast. Under Lenin, a visored military cap, set far back on the head, and a close-clipped moustache and beard were as ubiquitous as hard times. Stalin's rise brought the universal military jacket for home and office wear and the paralysis of the facial muscles that started in front and worked around to the back of the head. When Trotsky was exiled, the matted whiskers from amputated goatees stuffed all the plumbing for miles around Moscow.

On the fringes of society, as outmoded as moral indignation, a few unfashionable pre-war intellectuals padded about, pince nez balancing on too thin noses, neckties bulging around collars that age and malnutrition had gapped too large. These relics from the past, desperately fighting off the attention of the palaeontological institute were seldom seen by the younger generation, even at the biggest mass meetings. They kept inconspicuously to their country huts, collecting material for never to be published monographs on bird life and local legends.

The official class multiplied faster than a section in freshman algebra. Some means had to be developed of setting up the inevitable socialist distinctions between its members. Azeff wrote a

little pamphlet, which succeeded in winning for him the wintry half-smile of leadership favor. He described the various stages of the compulsory awestricken gape to be donned by an ordinary citizen when looking at an official, all the way from the quarter-exposed incisors that greeted a minor provincial delegate to the complete slackness of jaw and naked dental work to be displayed when a member of the Politburo came into view. The various party committees were made parts of a hierarchy that for strictness made the Almanach de Gotha look like the footrace for supper at a Sunday School picnic.

Their first day in office, the Bolsheviks had thrown all of the ritualistic paraphernalia of the old regime into a convenient ashcan. After a search, Azeff relocated the ashcan and decided to salvage the contents. Medals and honors needed only a perfunctory cleaning and relabeling to play their part in convincing the Russian workers of the essential dignity of the new society. Freed from the fetters of capitalist economics, Azeff felt certain the soviets could outdo Tsarist production of rituals and relics a hundred times over. What else was socialism good for, if not to surpass everything that had gone before?

In a roundabout way, he asked the Orgburo to make him head of the section devoted to fulfilling the Five Year Plan's production quota of social distinctions and relics. At the time, the job looked insignificant and lacking in a future. Grudgingly, because Hammargrensted still rankled, he was given an unheated office to use during the winter months and told to go ahead.

Azeff hailed Lenin's mummy—always providing it kept—as a step in the right direction. Already it had driven out of business the Orthodox monasteries with their black and shrivelled remains of saints and similar individuals who were considerably more profitable dead than alive. More portable reminders of the love the masses bore the leadership could be readily manufactured, all the way from the jewel encrusted vials which guarded the nail-parings of members of the Politburo to the cheap celluloid buttons celebrating the features of a village lumi-

nary. After Azeff's schedules got under way, a substantial percentage of Russian floor-space was given over to the production of such gadgets. Yearly prizes were awarded to the designers of the most handsome and tasteful items. For many years, the leading sellers in the field were the waterproof linen scapulars which showed Budyenny on his horse or Molotoff making a speech, embroidered in almost natural colors. Dangling on red cotton strings, they adorned the breasts of young Russians as they were initiated into the Young Pioneers or made their first formal May Day celebration. Enameled metal plaques, portraying Zhdanoff sitting behind his desk, were popular numbers for slipping into babies' coffins. A stiff cardboard photograph of a Red Marshal, with a hole where the face should have been and a free set of replacements for the features were directed at the girls' boarding school trade. But the pride of Azeff's industry was an eighteen-inch platinum-plated bust of Stalin. This was retailed at a nominal price to Arctic explorers and mountain climbers, who buried it in the hearts of the northern ice flows or at the tops of the highest peaks. At the very worst, Azeff felt, these busts would be the source of much interest and anxiety to future archeologists.

Azeff mourned the undeveloped state of Russian industry. Given machinery worthy of his imagination, he could have created uniforms, decorations and a ritual that would have made a small town undertaker's heart burst for sheer joy. He personally created the highest Russian decoration which was awarded only at long intervals to Stalin. That gentleman kept the accumulation in an old tobacco tin in his desk. The second highest, the Order of Lenin (fullface) was also awarded only to Stalin, who had fortunately found another empty tobacco tin. The Order of Lenin (profile) was handed out to all citizens who accumulated more than 200 running inches of publicity in Pravda annually. Then came a vast numerical series of Heroes of the Soviet Union, first grade, second grade, and so on down. Freight cars full of industrial medals rusted on factory sidings, waiting only to dis-

tinguish between conspicuously neat, cheerful, and actually productive workers. A man with friends in high places, and who knew the ropes could barricade himself behind a bulletproof chest protector made of copper, bronze, nickel, and pewter, interrupted with the infrequent glint of silver. Miserable introverts, good at nothing medallable, hid their shamefully naked bosoms behind the outspread pages of *Izvestia*.

Azeff's great ambition was to get every soviet citizen into a uniform, one which would tell, not only the occupation of the wearer, but also what his superiors thought of him as a party member and a man, and how far behind he was in his dues. The textile commissariat head stopped that, however, and Azeff was compelled to limit his tailoring to students. Graded shades of red, from the most embarrassed pink to the deepest maroon, indicated the undergraduate's field of specialization. A braided capband told his minor academic interests. The left shoulder bore the insignia of party affiliation and rank. The right sleeve was striped and barred and chevroned to give a brief political history of the student's immediate family. Grade points were announced in a sunburst of campaign ribbons over the student's left breast. The left trouser leg was braided to indicate his attendance record at party meetings, the right exhibited a compact health report. Strangers could read the scholar's IQ in the color of the lozenges on his collar tabs. After the initial protests, Azeff saw to it that Party and Young Communist League officials were equipped with ribbons which indicated the highest possible grades.

The actors' union demanded and won the gaudiest uniforms and most valuable decorations. Sky blue, old rose, and imperial purple tunics, bloomed luxuriously in Russian green rooms. Actresses began at the bottom with tiaras, and worked up to costumes that automatically doubled the width of all Russian stage entrances. The highest actors' honor, the Order of Dialectically Determined People's Artist of Dazzling Merit, gave its lucky recipients privileges that made the bald spots of romantic lead-

ing men the world over itch in envy. Every actor who won it was entitled to a timed hand of applause at each of his entrances and exits during a play. When an all star cast was assembled, a performance was indistinguishable from a busy day in a boiler factory. Lesser awards, adding inches to the beards worn by character actors and granting ingenues sole rights to their roles until they retired or died, were equally cherished.

At the moment, things seemed to be going almost well in Russia. Life was serene, its tempo moving leisurely as a hockey game, soundlessly as a trio of tomcats discussion international affairs on a back fence. For years skilled journalists had been gluing together an elaborate colored cardboard panorama of world affairs. Finally completed, it was erected around the boundaries of the Soviet Union. It gave a politically acceptable if somewhat horrifying picture of what went on in the world outside. At the same time, every Russian was constantly informed that Stalin had drawn a magic protective circle around his beloved Fatherland, a potent dividing line compounded of equal proportions of bats' dung, pigeons' blood, and a pamphlet entitled *Principles of Bolshevik Organization*. Inside the circle, bathed in sweetness and an expanding system of rural electrification, lived a deliriously happy people, strolling through an earthly paradise. Outside, raging in helpless envy, lurked chaos, capitalism, and a 26 hour working day. In Russia, the workers were their own masters and encouraged in biweekly use of the elevators. Only in the Soviet Union was industrial espionage absolutely forbidden and practiced solely by responsible graduates of technical training schools. Transportation in Moscow might be less than perfect, but in Paris and London the workers were expected to totter from place to place on stilts, which they were compelled to buy from capitalist agents of a venal government. Gloomy, walled-in slums pockmarked the gorgeous architectural facades of both these western metropolises. At night these rookeries echoed to the triumphant shouts of vigilante gangs made up of factory owners' sons who dashed through the filth-

piled streets, shooting at lighted windows and raping enough women to split the workers' solidarity. The handkerchief, first introduced abroad by soviet ambassadors, was making only the slowest progress in seeping down to the masses from the highest foreign social circles. All Germany possessed only fourteen elementary schools, and these were reserved for the children of the Social - Democratic trade union leaders and their colleagues among the hereditary nobility. In the United States, things were little better. Army corps of gangsters, wearing their traditional velvet collared, tight-fitting overcoats and derby hats, conducted extensive artillery and motorized cavalry operations along Broadway. The bodies of Trade Union Unity League organizers murdered by the Ku Klux Klan and the A. F. of L. bureaucrats poisoned the waters of Lake Michigan as far as Denver.

In this bubbling, infectious putrescence outside the magic circle, there was only one unifying force, a burning, envious hatred of the Soviet Union and all its citizens, conveniently listed alphabetically in an accurate indexing system. Hating each successive victory of the Communist Party kept more leaders of industry awake at night than all the demi-tasses brewed since the discovery of a good substitute for chicory.

But with less warning than an earthquake, the cosmic curtain raiser in the Kremlin changed his mind. Half of the cardboard outer world was taken down, repainted, and put up again to look more bloody than before. Germany and Italy groaned under the bloody heel of fascism, which was in itself only the final, bloody attempt of finance capital to forestall its bloody rendezvous with the chopping block. Fascist incendiaries roamed the world, taking advantage of the hopeless liberal confusion to prepare to sacrifice the best elements of the European workers in a new and more spectacular blood bath. Shocked by the bloody, slaver jaws of this beast of prey, the Communist Party, the spearhead of working class political activity, demanded a broad front of all democratic tendencies in the bloody fight against fascism. No man of good will could stand by while the bloody hand of

fascism threatened to assassinate everything good that had been done in the world since the discovery of iron.

The democratic half of the world, of course, was still much worse off than the Soviet Union, but it was no longer to have its feelings hurt by constant reminders of the fact. Democracy, the average Russian was startled to find out, was not a nasty word like banditry, but meant something nice, like "butter." As for "revolution," it disappeared completely from the dictionaries and left a gap that not even the strange term "ballot" could fill.

This shifting of world scenery made it necessary for the Comintern to court those petty-bourgeois intellectuals who had hitherto been confined to washing dishes in the cellar. The romance that suddenly burgeoned between the Communists and the middle class was something that made Paolo and Francesca look like an advertisement for electrical refrigeration. Substantial citizens who had spent the best years of their lives cowering beneath the most vicious section of the Communist vocabulary were startled to find themselves contributing to causes they had hitherto studiously refrained from believing existed. The genteel line of liberals who had stubbornly kept marching toward the horizon suddenly became aware of a people's Front band at their head, tootling the unfamiliar music with as much gusto as if it had been composed by the great secretary personally.

Whatever was progressive, ten cents a word, better billings, quicker transitions from instructorships to full professorships, the Communists embraced as their own idea. Whatever was bad, cancer, tornadoes, and Franco, they were the first to denounce. The Nazis in particular were made to understand that they were forever beyond the pale, no matter how few years might elapse before a satisfactory agreement with them might be reached.

For the ninety-first time, the final conflict had come at last, but the lineups were considerably altered from the original blueprints.

As a result of the shift, the leaders of the Comintern were compelled to enlarge their private burial squad, the one that had

charge of disposing of all the used-up political slogans. In the hectic inner life of the Communist movement, a slogan very seldom died from old age. Either it collapsed from overwork or somebody stabbed it in the back. The heroic shouts of defiance and support that thundered down the line of march on many a May Day lie quietly in the cellar of a ruined monastery near Moscow. All contradictions liquidated, "Vote for FDR!", "A Vote for FDR is a Vote for Lee, Higginson, and Co.!", "Long Live Democracy!", "Democracy is a Phony!", "Daladier is a Genius!", "Daladier is Rothschild's stooge!", "Hang Hitler!", and "Hang on to Hitler!" huddle their tired bones together. The remainder of the cellar is taken up by the Kremlin's private mushroom beds. At first, it was feared that some of the buried slogans might poison the mushrooms, or vice versa, but up to now, nothing untoward has occurred. Mistakes have naturally been made. Once or twice leading comrades have accidentally eaten some of their own discarded slogans, garnished over a fine steak, but there have been no noticeable ill effects.

Even the relentless campaign against religion had to be revised. It was felt that the change in the party line offered unusual opportunities for enlisting a large section of the forces of the supernatural in the war against fascism. Angels, saints, firesprites, waterdevils, Yin and Yang, lingam and yoni, all would take their proper place in the broad popular movement against reaction. Their peculiar function would be to attack the ancient Teutonic and Roman spiritual allies of Hitler and Mussolini, and win over large sections of the unorganized and non-party supernatural beings. Selected representatives of the Comintern—those who looked unusually smug and pious—were subjected to a rigorous theological training. After receiving their diplomas, they could distinguish between *homoiousian* and *homooousian* quicker than anybody except certain heretics who still nursed their grievances about the entire affair. Trainees with good loud voices and no fear of heights were apprenticed to muezzins after they had been drilled in devotion to Allah and the cause of the

semi-colonial peoples. The remainder were parcelled out among the world religions. One section spent their time studying Tibetan prayer wheels, taking them apart and putting them together until they were sure just where the "*Om mani padme hum*," was coming from. Others sat cross-legged until they lost the power of locomotion, gazing at their navels and comparing Nirvana with Stalin's ideas about the problems of oppressed minorities. Still others boned up on Shinto ceremonies, intending to spend a future life causing a serious confusion in the mind of the Japanese peasant between the deference due his ancestors and the amount of trust he could put in the party line.

In spite of Russia's sudden affection for democracy, a few scarred and suspicious liberals still sidled away when the Popular Front came ambling toward them, rolling the ends of its big black moustache and rotating a lustful eye. Azeff decided that these skeptics could only be convinced of the Comintern's honorable intentions if Russia adopted a constitution.

Azeff played his cards skilfully. At last the official credit for suggesting the constitution came over and whined hopefully on his doorstep. He was offered and accepted the post of Commissar of Constitutional Construction. Once again he found himself with riparian rights on the main stream of Russian development. In the making of the three hundred successive constitutions, each the most democratic in the world and an improvement on the last, Azeff especially concerned himself with providing irrevocable guarantees for the secret ballot and free speech. Naturally, a soviet citizen was expected to exhibit a modest temperance in the exercise of both. Individuals not asking for trouble would announce their elective choices in voices at least ninety decibels loud before officials appointed by the local party units. The stenographers were privileged to demand that the voter's choice be repeated until they fully understood it.

Free speech was an important boon in some of the more backward country districts where speech of any kind had long been at a premium. The peasants found it impossible to pay the taxes

the party levied on words, ranging from a kopek for a preposition to a ruble and a half for a compound noun. It was far cheaper to converse in gestures. Elaborate machines had been built which could reproduce mechanically every movement known to this gesture speech. Schools of local writers developed and equipped the machines with a complete literature, including poems which compared the October Revolution to a sunrise and reportage which commented on the improved climatic conditions since the birth of Stalin. The slightest shade of servility in resolutions of thanks, the most involved grammatical constructions were easily expressed by a buzz of clockwork and a blur of waving arms. After Azeff's constitutions were adopted, teachers were sent out into these areas to persuade the inhabitants to use their vocal cords again. The peasants were extremely grateful after it was explained that free speech was a purely Russian luxury and that taxes on words were infinitely higher in the outside world.

Because of the rapidity with which these new constitutions succeeded each other, it was possible for them to include the names of the official delegates as well as insist on a freely elected congress of the soviets. Elections took place with a minimum of fuss. The first fourteen executions in any precinct usually assured the government's ticket unanimous support. When the original delegates gathered for their first meeting, timid and uncertain as adolescents stepping out on their first dance floor, they discovered that no building was available to house their deliberations. They disposed themselves about the streets and waited for the mortality lists from the Commissariat of Buildings and Construction to appear. Old, scant-bearded Buriats, Mongols who come swaying in atop narrow gauge camels, Samoyeds sweltering in the heat of the Moscow winter, party functionaries up from Yalta for a quick weekend, blond Karelians who had skied down from the northern forests, Stakhonovists who broke out into a heavy sweat from their fierce concentration upon sitting still, oil workers from Baku whose shirts assayed four times the octane rating of soviet gasoline, scratching Ukrainian farmers

who anxiously asked after the health of the Tsarevitch, Arctic explorers who squatted jealously on their imported cakes of ice; all these gazed unhappily at each other and thought that if this was what Russia had elected unanimously, then things were much worse than anybody had said.

The construction of the Great Hall of the Soviets had been delayed because Azeff was unable to find suitable plans. The first design, which he discarded immediately, was an uninspired steal from the American capitol, but with instructions for the delegates coming out of a loudspeaker system, instead of the traditional lobby. Azeff finally decided on an indoor version of a Greek amphitheater, hemmed in by semicircular tiers of pine benches. Each delegate was separated from his neighbors by pine partitions, similar to those used in prison chapels and secondary schools which employ the honor system in examinations. By craning his neck, he might catch sight of the stage, from which the noise from the loudspeakers emanated. Before Azeff proposed a cheaper mechanism, there had been talk of installing an elaborate voting machine. In the final plans, a simple wiring system carried a gentle but authoritative current of electricity through an exposed electrode on each seat. The chairman was given a pushbutton and instructed to call for a rising vote on all controversial issues.

Inevitably, this moonstruck love for democracy called for a general facelifting in Russian culture. History no longer started with Lenin's birthday. It began to concern itself with the magnificent Russian tradition that stretched all the way back to a primitive stone age archetype, named Ivan. The standard novel was drastically revised, although many readers viewed its disappearance with the same nostalgic relief that greeted the passing of the Model T Ford. The hero was transformed into a strong, single-minded GPU agent, equipped with a machine for pulverizing scruples and a pickaxe to thrust into the skulls of people who argued with him. The villain was an out and out Schutzstaffel hireling, fond of counting his blood corpuscles and regu-

lar exercise. Wherever democratic rights and civil liberties were threatened, the Russian kept a perpetual watch to foil the Nazi's plans, or improve on them as the case might be.

This simple plot, full of conflict and high moral resolve, could be shifted forward and backward through history and geography. Sometimes the Russian was called Peter the Great, another time Vladimir of Kieff or Suvoroff. Whatever his name, he walked about in the love of the common people, as all-embracing as a fifteen dollar ulster. Prefabricated plot skeletons were cut to measure in Russia and exported, disguised rather remarkably as cheese, to all sections of the International. At their destinations, Moscow trained crews broke open the crates and reassembled the plots, remodelling them a little to suit the taste of the local public. In France, the hero was always referred to as Robespierre or Saint Louis. Across the channel, Cromwell and Hereward the Wake fought and bled for the national ideal and the rising mercantile class. Americans followed with intense interest the doings of noble Romans addressed by their fellows as Jefferson, Jackson, Lincoln, and Frederick Douglass. Emmet and Papineau played one night stands in the hinterlands of Ireland and Canada.

All these literary works carefully explained the fundamental, unbridgeable differences between fascism and communism. Fascism was bloodthirsty, cruel, violently anti-intellectual. It lowered the standard of living and established a party dictatorship over the rest of the population. Communism was generous, worshipping science like a god, and only liquidated those individuals who might statistically be expected to argue with it at some time in the future. Just as plenums were superior to any possible differences in blood types, so was Communism superior to Nazism.

This sudden preoccupation with democracy might have helped some Soviet geniuses, but it doomed Vissarion Snitz. Snitz was not his real name, of course. The original was half an alphabet longer and would have looked hysterical on a theater marquee. Snitz was a party name and meant "Carborundum."

A few weeks after Stalin's heroic defense of Tsaritsyn, Snitz was given an old camera, a few mumbled instructions and sent into the steppes beyond Lake Balkash to make an epic.

He began by planning a straightforward narrative of a peasant uprising in the Ukraine. He focussed his camera on the customary seamy-faced grandsires, sucking gummily away at ashly pipes, on the broad shouldered youthful firebrands with a look of wonder in their eyes and cheekbones that could have been used for hatracks, on the plump, downy-cheeked, pneumatic daughters of the local citizenry, and on the professionally lecherous Tsarist tax collectors. Marching columns of agricultural workers were silhouetted against every possible variety of cloud flecked skies. Fifty per cent of the film footage was given over to sharply angled closeups, so accurately focussed that they made actors out of the pores on the peasants' faces. The plot ended with an eye-gouging, scythe swinging battle, from which the government tax collectors retreated with comic haste. Just as the film rolls were being packed for shipment to Moscow, the Ukraine began to express a principled difference with the soviet's agricultural program.

In response to an official telegram, Snitz burned his reels at the dead of night. He began a second version concerned with the revolt of an anonymous tribe of desert herdsmen. This revolution was inspired by a genuine love of freedom and a desire to rescue the daughters of the tribe from a fate worse than the first three things which automatically come to mind. Snitz focussed his cameras on more sheep than are needed to make all the camel's hair overcoats in the world. He shot shepherders at dawn and at sunset, in the rain and in the fog, with the light coming from behind the camera and from in front. He shot from pits dug in the sand and with his cameraman dangling from the tops of the tallest rickety ladders. Just as he was about to cut this travelogue and pin together the semblance of a plot, word came from Moscow that serious sabotage had been discovered in the wool production figures for the past decade. Perhaps it would be better

if he told the story of the heroic struggles of the Russian people, guided by party, overthrowing the bloody plans of foreign interventionists.

This seemed too easy at first, and it would have been, if it were not for the difficulties Snitz had in keeping his interventionists stabilized. No sooner had he canned a half dozen reels in which the English hawhawed their villainous way south from Archangel than he had to start all over again, filming the misdeeds of the shorter, slant-eyed, buck-toothed enemies of socialism. After shooting a month's appropriation away on symbolical shots of the rising sun and maggoty chrysanthemums, he was suddenly shifted to making the Germans appear to be the serious menace. So the actors were padded and peroxided and taught to grunt politely instead of hiss. Crazed by overwork, make-up men and dialogue writers committed hara-kiri on vacant sound stages, fought bloody but inconclusive duels with schläger, or drank themselves into drugged stupors on Oolong and crumpets.

The aesthetic problems were no simpler. Snitz began his directorial career as a pedestrian but conscientious imitator of Charlie Chaplin. His artistic ambitions were confined to yearning for an actor who combined the athletic ability of the elder Fairbanks with the suave manner of Wallace Reid. This period ended when an anonymous admirer sent him a marked editorial from *International Soukino* which hinted that Chaplin was merely one more bourgeois opiate, distinguished from the rest only by his baggy trousers. The editorial ended on an ominous note. "We repeat," the writer said, "that unless there is an immediate and remarkable change for the better in a director named V——— S———, there will be a conspicuously empty megaphone decorating a location beyond Lake Balkash. The safety of the state does not permit us to be any more specific." Snitz agreeably spent the next few years barbecuing his camera technique before the artistic fires engendered by the *Cabinet of Doctor Caligari*. Russian audiences, he felt, would enthusiastically accept the familiar distortions and the weird figures who limped into the camera's

eye for a brief second and then disappeared into a just political obscurity. He never had a chance to find out, however, for *International Sovkino* printed an editorial denouncing the German experimental film as the spiritual father of Italian fascism. For a change, Snitz would have liked to compete seriously with Cecil B. DeMille, but he knew the Five Year Plan could never stand the strain. Toward the end, he became overwhelmed with the possibilities of the sound movie, experimenting happily and hampered only by the limitations of the Russian language.

But Snitz's administrative difficulties dwarfed all others. Whenever a major functionary's nephew failed his army examinations, flunked out of three universities, and insisted that his weak heart could never stand the wear and tear of factory work, the first thought of his closest relatives was, "Send him to Visarion Snitz." An endless river of incompetents, officially labelled as assistant directors, associate costume designers, and vice-managers of properties streamed across the steppes and eddied about the location beside the lake. Even after the uncles had been purged in Moscow, the recruits still kept coming, all young, eager, stupid, and at one time well-connected.

By careful management, he made his little empire—which headquarters knew only as Project K37—entirely self sufficient. Stripped to the waist and working under the biting lash of sardonic foremen, workcrews of nephews dammed a nearby stream and built a powerplant. Others sowed the fertile steppes with wheat, still others built mills and ground the grain into flour. Timber cruisers roamed the forests, marking the trees that were to be cut down for Project K37's screaming sawmills. Carpenters' hammers were heard through the town, converting the shabby canvas tents into permanent habitations of plaster and lath. The crematorium worked three shifts every twenty-four hours, preparing for shipment the remains of nephews whose uncles had taken a sudden turn for the political worse. The genealogical institute, sweating to make sure that the Moscow punishments were equitably distributed among the next of kin, compiled com-

plete family histories for every resident of the town and two different sets for unusually suspicious characters. Project K37's home for reforming prostitutes boasted a higher rate of recidivism than any other known to the official records. Industry thrived, the smoke from busy factory chimneys darkened the sky and made Snitz curse majestically at the man-made clouds that kept the sun off his outdoor sets. Trade flourished, pitchmen appeared in every third doorway, and there were three and a half photographers for every actor, all of them doing a rushing business. At its height, Project K37 was within 5,000 inhabitants of winning the right to call itself Stalinositz.

Suddenly the magic stream of replacements dried up. But the telegrams ordering executions poured in at the old rate. Lacking further instructions, the isolated movie makers dutifully fusilladed each other. At the end, Snitz and a deaf and dumb camel driver were the only two inhabitants left alive. The camel driver wandered off and Project K37 became, for all practical purposes, a ghost town. Wolves howled and padded about the streets at night, disturbing the slumbers of the elephants left over from a projected remake of the Hannibal-Scipio story in terms of the relationship between party sections and units. In the stucco-cracked office buildings, mile after mile of personal histories gathered dust, awaiting only the impious hand of the writer for the confession magazines. The city was so quiet a dossier could have been heard to drop. Reformed prostitutes, freed from the drudgery of the jute mill and the overall factory, slept quietly in the middle strata of the slag piles over by the Bessemer furnaces. In a nearby dump, acres of lighting equipment, discarded during the period when Snitz saw himself as the proletarian Von Sternberg, rusted into lacy patterns, ambitious for the touch of an electrician's crew that had vanished beyond the memory of everything save analytical chemistry. Even the doors of the local GPU headquarters flared helplessly open, as if the building itself cupped its ears to listen for the sound of the rubber truncheon and the self-accelerating zeal that were no more.

Snitz shouted a melancholy, "Cut!" to his lost empire and set about loading his latest revised scenario between the humps of seventeen of his remaining camels. Then he started for Moscow. After he arrived, he spent his days waiting in official anterooms. Each functionary he visited stoutly denied that he had ever heard of Vissarion Snitz, at least since the 1905 revolution. Project K37, they assured him gently, was merely a product of his disordered imagination. Much to his disgust, they went so far as to try to explain away the camels, until he made a practice of sending one or two of them unannounced into the functionary's office ahead of him. But he never gave up hope. Today he is regarded as one of the permanent sights of the metropolis, a bewildered little man who wanders about the streets, one hand tightly clutching a megaphone. The other grasps the halter that leads the first of seventeen Bactrian camels, all staggering beneath a scenario that no one will bother to read.

With democracy safely in the saddle, Azeff's personal position was as secure as a haystack in a tornado. This may seem like little enough to a Kansas reader, but in Russia it was the equivalent of an income sufficient to enable a man of thirty to live the rest of his days in luxury. His day's work began as soon as he started shaving. As the razor chewed its way back and forth across his cheeks he dictated the outlines of some new project that he had mulled over during the night. On a typical day, he might be absorbed in a revolutionary improvement in the methods of tomato planting, one which would involve only half as much stooping over on the part of the farmer. During breakfast he could accede to the request of a provincial gymnastics society, desiring specifications for an entirely new kind of headstand on the parallel bars. While he sipped his tea and rolled his first cigaret, he received a delegation of Soviet metallurgical engineers with whom he discussed the ideological background of the newest soviet alloy, reported to be almost as strong as cast iron. Walking downstairs to his automobile, he dashed off the notes which served as the basis of a criticism of the syntax of a

young Tadjik poet. While the chauffeur hurled him headlong towards his office, he made suggestions for an architectural improvement of one side of the street while drawing the specifications for razing the other.

On his arrival, he customarily addressed a mass meeting of the entire staff, pointing out that while erasures had made a laudable decline of $8\frac{1}{2}\%$, at least $17\frac{3}{4}\%$ of the letters sent out were still being misdirected. A subcommittee was appointed to investigate this situation and bring in detailed recommendations. In his private office, he found the head proofreader of the State Publishing House waiting to ask his advice on a question of typographical etiquette. Azeff considered the matter for a second and then said, that in his opinion, a favorable reference to Stalin took precedence over all other items in tables of contents except direct quotations from Stalin's writings. The subsequent half hour of inactivity Azeff put to good use by cleaning his nails, looking out the window, and writing a poison pen letter in disguised handwriting to the police. This recommended that the basement of a certain prominent official—whose wife had accidentally spilled hot tea over Azeff's new white duck trousers the day before—be investigated. The police would be sure to find a portrait of Comrade Stalin hung less than the prescribed eight feet away from a garbage can.

A liquid-eyed girl reporter on a technical high school paper walked in, glassily intent on getting an interview. Before she could get over her shock at seeing Azeff face to face, he handed her a mimeographed sheet which offered the startling information that his favorite color was red, his favorite hobby, hard work, his favorite relaxation, attending committee meetings, his favorite dish, cold beet borscht, and his favorite public figure, Comrade Stalin. He also pointed out that he was noted for his agreeableness and his fondness for high school girls. Then he kissed her ardently but abstractedly some forty or fifty times on the brow, and sent her on her way, loaded and primed to begin the first chapter of her memoirs.

Azeff ate lunch in his limousine, dashing across Moscow to open an art exhibition. He moved through the galleries at a brisk trot, carefully inspecting all the five hundred pictures in less than ten minutes. It took him almost twice as long to order canvasses painted by twenty-five personal friends rehung in a better light and to sign the execution warrants for a dozen artists the direction of whose brush strokes had revealed a fundamental anti-soviet bias.

While he prepared for the serious business of the afternoon he snatched a few moments of merited relaxation by rearranging several sections of the Comintern. Fourteen district organizers in Bulgaria were expelled as the result of rumors coded in by their subordinates. He demanded a shakeup in the party press in British India, feeling that the editors had grown stodgy and lax since the latest shakeup three weeks before. And he dashed off a note to the Argentine section, insisting that unless it tripled its quota of wealthy, elderly, female sympathizers within the month, its charter would be taken up immediately.

The remainder of the afternoon was spent in committee meetings. That habit of attending these meetings had grown on Azeff to the point where he was unable to talk to himself unless there were several other people in the room. In the evening, after dining at a large hotel, he made a brief appearance on the platform of a mass meeting, graciously accepted a resolution of thanks from a group of factory workers whose foreman had disappeared, made a ritual visit to the lobby of the Opera house during the second act intermission, and then went home to bed. As he lay relaxed, he counted up the number of times he had been publicly embraced by leading comrades during the past six months. Just before he dropped off to dreamless slumbers, he thought up two neat maneuvers that could be used for blackening the character of his two closest friends, should the occasion ever arise.

By this time, most of the famine dead had been buried and their wills probated. The country was under the impression that

for the 38th time, life was about to become a little easier. Azeff passed a resolution through the Politburo which set up a commission of astronomers and physicists to determine the exact moment when socialism made its appearance. Toward the end of 1934, this committee began to hold its daily meetings. At first all conversation was forbidden. Each member stared breathlessly at his stop watch, anxious to be the first to notice proletarian quantity turning into socialist quality. Half an artillery regiment waited at attention in the park outside, ready to fire a salvo when the committee signalled. Discarded lumber was piled in heaps in every village to provide the celebratory bonfires. Leading comrades neglected their ordinary business to think up appropriate impromptu remarks to make at the ceremonies. A standing order was sent out that all factories were to close at noon of the joyful day.

Grown hollow eyed and thinner, long since cut off the annual budget, the committee members still gather every day at noon. Their instruments are scabbed with rust, the special telegraph wire to Greenwich dangles uselessly from the window. They talk in monosyllables, long ago their veins of conversational brilliance petered out. But they possess a faith which makes reality seem as impertinent as an alarm clock. If socialism ever does get around to taking out Russian citizenship papers, at least the appointed representatives of the soviet—true, grown somewhat aged and shabby—will be there to hail its advent.

While the committee kept its hopeful vigil, the rest of the nation cowered beneath an epidemic of ominous supernatural portents. Comets flamed incandescent through the northern skies, meteors loafed contemptuously down on the startled countryside. Winter was late in coming, for a while there was much talk of expelling it from the party for unreliability. Novaya Zembla held a bathing beauty contest out of doors in January, and only one contestant was so much as frostbitten. Hordes of wild animals, including lemmings and impressionable members of the Young Communist League were on the move, migrating across

the borders like lumpy, discrete rivers. Armies of camels came lurching out of the mist, passed before the bewildered eyes of the customs patrols and disappeared into Afghanistan. Even the petty-bourgeois elements among the rabbits had packed their belongings and started east, practising confessions under their breaths as they headed for the best unclaimed land in Siberia.

There were other portents too. Lenin's mummy, in its handsome showcase in the hutch on Red Square was covered with a perpetual perspiration which grew more visible each time Molotoff made a speech. Stalin became dangerously garrulous, saying "Good morning" once or twice a week to his closest friends as he passed them in the halls and adding a new word every day to his vocabulary. Some of the most popular soviet theoretical books disappeared from library shelves with a puff of flame and a soft report, much like an overheated pingpong ball. Leading comrades stayed mysteriously awake during other leading comrades' speeches. And it was rumored, but always with a disheartening variance in the details, that somebody, somewhere, sometime had muttered an almost audible "No!" when an important vote was being taken.

Singly, these events were unimportant. Taken together, they seriously disturbed the Russian leaders. Life was complicated enough without some supernatural third party interfering with the relationships between the average citizen and his society. Nature had proved to be too tough and intractable to serve as a long term enemy of the people. Some new focus of popular anger had to be produced or there was no telling what might happen. Azeff, wandering home from an all night meeting on the problem, was struck by an inspiration so momentous that fifteen stitches had to be taken in his scalp. Why not make Trotsky head enemy of the people number one? The Soviet Union would have to look far to find a fitter object of persecution. The attack on him could go on forever because, for the time being, he was out of the reach of the GPU and hence practically indestructible. He cartooned well, and as far as was known, he lacked

the dangerous qualities of such forces of nature as earthquakes and cyclones. His onetime followers were readily available to the police, although most of them had recanted their opinions so often their minds were as unstable as a quart of milk on a hot day. In a pinch, they could be injected with drugs which would enable the authorities to stand them up against a wall long enough to be shot. Hitherto, traitors had been turned out by the old handicraft methods of the village artel. Now the party must demand a switch over to the fully mechanized methods that were geared to the national industrial tempo.

Before the attack on Trotsky could begin, all Russian thinking had to be thoroughly standardized. Azeff threw the necessary switch on the propaganda machine. Within two weeks he could look at his watch, note the time, and know to the last implication just what was in the mind of every loyal citizen at that moment. His success was largely due to the unselfish efforts of the best brains in Russia—by definition—who worked around the clock, inserting ideas into the rank and file's mental apparatuses. Every day, as leadenly inevitable as rain in the tropics, each locality received its handpicked shower of texts and glosses. In the cities, men carefully refrained from saying "Hello" to their wives at breakfast until they had looked over *Izvestia* and picked out one of the safer looking official topics of conversation. In the smaller villages, a party member supervised the public well where housewives came once a day and filled their buckets with enough opinions to last their families for the next twenty-four hours. Each household was required to maintain a reserve tank, filled with substantial but pasteurized ideas, to tide them over periods when the official idea supply failed.

The slogans that embodied these official ideas became shibboleths that were just as fatal as the original article. Even the slightest unconscious alteration of the current slogan was adequate legal evidence of some deepseated antagonism toward the party line. Such a variation was considered as giving direct aid to the Mikado, somewhere in between poisoning the Vladivos-

tock water supply and presenting the Japanese general staff with a medium-sized artillery park. One hectic year, the Soviet Union was almost delivered to its enemies, lock, stock, thumbscrew, and rack, by a gang of international spies who hocused the annual slogan. By manipulations in the state telegraph office on the day the slogan appeared, the plotters managed to throw the soviet press into almost irretrievable discord. One half the newspapers printed the correct formulation, "Long Live Comrade Stalin, the Airplane Pilot of Bolshevism!" The other rocked the safety of the state to its foundations by proclaiming, "Long Live Comrade Stalin, the Locomotive Engineer of World Socialism!" The government acted at once. Martial law was proclaimed in every place that boasted more than one-third of an inhabitant to the square mile. Hundreds of suspects were detected loitering beside the telegraph wires and immediately shot. Locomotive engineers were picked up wherever they could be found and shipped off to Siberia, just in case. Airplane pilots were guarded by selected strong arm men from the GPU, anxious to destroy the secret foe. The discredited criminals, horror-stricken to find their petty-bourgeois natures unmasked by the prompt action of the government, were made to stew in their own juice till choked in their own venom. But nobody denied that it was a near thing.

The police took slogans seriously. When Stalin proclaimed, "Life must be more joyous," two unhappy victims of the mumps, jaws swollen tight, were detected neglecting to smile. It did little good for the heirs to explain.

For the more efficient destruction of Trotsky, the GPU divided itself into a regular police section, handy with the brass knuckles and the handcuffs, and a more effete group, detailed to handle history. Azeff worked with the first group only long enough to introduce the idea of true socialist competition. Teams were made up, each composed of the men on the wagon, one judge, and two executioners. With surprisingly little practice, Azeff's best teams were soon flipping the prisoners back and forth with the careless ease that characterizes a million dollar infield. Yearly

competitions were held to encourage the players' love of the game. For a long time, the cup was held by the team from Gorky which demonstrated that a family could be arrested, their belongings confiscated, the adults shot, and the children started on a three thousand mile walking tour to the prison camps, all in less time than it took the head of the house to go down to the corner and back for a newspaper.

Then Azeff turned his attention on history and raised the immortal slogan, "Take the offensive on the historical front." Russian scholars knew that when Azeff mentioned the offensive he had a pretty good idea of what he wanted. In his own eye, Azeff saw world history as the record of the agelong attempts of the peaceful, progressive, essentially democratic Russian people to protect themselves against the savage and brutal imperialistic attacks of Swedes, Finns, Lithuanians, Poles, Tartars, Turks, Letts, Prussians, Bulgarians, Rumanians, Mongols, Danes, and anybody else who happened to be in the neighborhood during the preceding twenty-four hours. All Russia had ever wanted was to be left alone in a land commensurate with her national aspirations and a reasonable number of opportunities to infect the surrounding world with culture.

Russia, Azeff announced officially, was dependent upon Europe only for enough support to her western boundary to keep the entire nation from tilting up on edge and sliding into the sea.

When the police teams really began to function, the historians had to hump themselves. Trial trod on trial so fast that even the judges talked of overwork. The busy smoke of the Lubyanka poured heavenward in a thick column. One beneficiary of a state-donated cremation scarcely had time to cool off before another applicant clamored for his ashy bed. Azeff's historians slept in their clothes for weeks on end. They kept a nervous watch, ready at any moment to turn the rascals out of the history books as soon as the remains were shipped off to the relatives. Major political figures kept disappearing faster than the printers could snatch their names from the galleys and throw them in the hell-

box. Azeff searched desperately for a faster way of printing the revised histories. He first became interested in a method of writing names on water advocated by a deceased British poet but found that this was too cumbersome for ordinary classroom use. Then he dabbled with a printing ink which was guaranteed to fade within two weeks, leaving the paper blank for the improved version. This method was discarded after Azeff was struck by the terrifying thought that some of the ink might fall into the hands of the general public and be used by traitors in writing their confessions. As a last resort he fell back upon traditional letter-press printing. But in Azeff's hands, this method became expanded beyond the needs of a tabloid editor on a day when three declarations of war, eighteen rape cases in a respectable suburb, a hurricane, and the assassination of the mayor insisted upon being brought to attention of the reading public. Azeff's mile long presses could soon print a thousand complete forty volume sets of the *Official History of the CPSU* every six seconds. And each day they turned out three complete issues for general circulation, a bulldog, a subscribers' home edition, and a late afternoon final with complete box scores.

Azeff also had his troubles in editing the official biographical encyclopedia. Not only were the current careers of individuals subject to constant change, but even their pasts were marked, "Under construction, proceed at your own risk." At first he hoped to make his task simpler by eliminating all reference to the October Revolution. This deletion brought in so many letters of protest, signed "Old Subscriber" and "Conservative," that he compromised by keeping the plot but changing the cast at frequent intervals. He prepared a standard outline of the struggle, which included all major battles, congresses, and reasonable activities. In the completed text, names of participating individuals were printed in boldface capital letters. Thus it was simple for an editor to run his eye down the page, cross off the names of the old heroes and substitute the new as fast as the teletype brought the news of the changes. The names themselves

were printed in a special rubber type which could contract or expand to equalize any syllabic differences between the old traitors and the new Titans.

Rank in the biographies was determined by the earliest age at which the functionaries were credited with beginning their political activities. Zhdanoff at the age of four caused a mutiny in the entire destroyer fleet of the Tsarist navy. Molotoff, barely three, had led an almost successful machinists' strike in Saint Petersburg, organizing the workers' resistance, editing a strike newspaper, and making hundreds of speeches a day. Voroshiloff began his military studies at an unbelievably early age, removing his mouth from his mother's breast only long enough to spit abstractedly and immediately returning to working out a plan of campaign against Finland. For himself, Azeff retained a modest street riot, instigated when approaching his fifth birthday.

By this time, Azeff's educating campaign had succeeded in turning the party into little more than a salesforce of house-to-house book peddlers. Each salesman, in order to keep his stock up-to-date, carried a portable radio. Changes in the official line-up were broadcast every hour on the hour. Seated on a convenient curb, munching his black bread and greying sausage, the weary doorbell pusher could flip a dial and hear, "Flash! I have just been handed a bulletin announcing that Comrade Potienko is the new head of the Fine Print Section of the Department of Newspapers, Magazines, and Suspicious Documents. He succeeds the late social-diversionist scum, Pogrotsky, whose long career as a pimp for the worst elements of world reaction was finally exposed at the last convention of the Party. You all remember how the delegates broke into a spontaneous demonstration of affection at the first mention of Comrade Stalin's name. According to the democratically adopted schedule, the demonstration was scheduled to last for eight hours, seventeen minutes, twelve and one half seconds, a record far surpassing the best that has been accomplished under capitalism. Pogrotsky was discovered in his seat before the fifth hour was over. He

brazenly pleaded an attack of appendicitis as his excuse. His widow is still at liberty but the police expect new arrests shortly."

Many party members still remember that hectic afternoon in 1938 when the announcer fell more than sixteen hours behind events at the Commissariat of Internal Affairs.

Azeff's main personal contribution to the historical campaign was the three volume *Brief Survey of Trotskyism from Cain and Judas Iscariot to the Present Time*. Here he described the vast underground movement of vice, terror, and treason which the Trotskyites had miraculously managed to keep going through the centuries, occasionally relying for help on the fallen angels—who were Trotskyites themselves on their mothers' sides—and the rest of the time limping along with the aid of the local reactionaries.

The first volume began with the account of a number of extremely suspicious discoveries along the Crimean coast, dating from the Bronze Age in Russia but considerably before the appearance of man anywhere else. The complete destruction of this Golden Age in Crimea seems to be the first concrete evidence of Trotskyite sabotage. Egyptian and Babylonian history are still not clear enough to reveal more than the outlines of the agelong struggle between the forces of progress on the one hand and the diseased hirelings of reaction on the other. This was further proof of the way in which the Trotskyites worked. Unquestionably, descendants of these earlier criminals, had spared no pains to extirpate the record of their party's infamy. In Greece, the story was sadder still. Here, generation after generation of noble Trotskyite families had disposed of themselves to the Persians at wholesale prices. Under Roman rule, the Mithraic lodges nourished the Levantine fires of sinfulness, celebrating horrid orgies during which they drank the blood of government officials and plotted the murder of the best leader of the Roman people. For centuries they carried on insidious propaganda to undermine the Pax Romana, the justly famous peace policy of the Roman Empire.

When the star of Christianity rose in the Oriental heavens, they quickly seized upon the new opportunities for their work of disruption. As heretics of various breeds, they bent every effort to smash the broad People's Front of all anti-imperialist elements against the brutal dictatorship of the Roman overlords. At the Council of Nicea, they openly sought to disrupt the proceedings by introducing quibbles about the relationship between thought and action, while the more important problems of being, substance, and state went neglected. In the Middle Ages they assumed the guise of the Knights of the Temple—who, if the truth be known, had sabotaged every Crusade—and carried on a relentless but unsuccessful struggle against the chief representative of European unity, the Roman Pope. Or else they turned to witchcraft, reviving the rites of paganism as an aid to their criminal schemes to blight the crops, dry up the cows, and assist in the ravages of the Black Death. When more lethal deeds seemed beyond their reach, they careened irresponsibly about the country on broomsticks, souring cream and fouling fishlines. In the eighteenth century, the chroniclers knew them as the Rosicrucians and record their treasonable negotiations with the Martian emissaries. Only the relentless operations of history foiled them in their plot to sell the world to the men from Mars.

In modern times, Trotskyites could be distinguished from the rest of the population by their perpetually suspicious manner. They were unable even to cross a street without arousing mingled emotions in the bosom of every honest citizen. Plotting was so ingrained upon their natures that countless times police agents had surprised them in the midst of some dastardly attempt upon their own health.

Trotsky's immediate family had been chiefly responsible for forcing Tsarism from the sound policy of national expansion into selling bonds to British capital and letting Germans handle army contracts. His grandfather manufactured the most notoriously sinister vodka in Russia. An uncle was credited with being the major purveyor of opium to the intelligentsia. His father had

been a faithful servant of both the Mikado and the Sublime Porte. Azeff knew of documents which proved that he had made the original suggestion for sending the Baltic Fleet to the relief of Port Arthur.

In Russia, Trotsky had first opposed the Bolsheviks and then joined them, both actions highly suspicious in themselves. At Brest-Litovsk he had plotted with Bukharin to assassinate Stalin, Lenin, and Azeff. This done, he hoped to set up a royalist dictatorship under the joint protection of the Kaiser and an unnamed third party, whose representative strolled about during the proceedings enveloped in a cloud of sulphur and brimstone. The original treaty of alliance, signed in blood and waiving all rights to the plotters' immortal souls, can still be seen in the Museum of the Revolution in Leningrad.

After a *Brief Survey*, etc. was published, the Soviet Bureau of Entomology, in a burst of enthusiasm, officially proclaimed that the followers of Trotsky were gnats, cockroaches, and in rare instances, tarantulas.

Behind these dramatic tales of treason, Azeff's fine theatrical intuition soon sensed the core of a smash hit. He could see the plot already, springing naturally from the tangled web of intrigue and mystery. It was nothing less than the dramatic narrative of the unsuccessful attempts to assassinate Stalin. Such a play promised action, suspense, and plenty of comic relief. Disgraced leaders could be rounded up for the most prominent roles. Zinovieff and Kameneff on trial for attempting to murder Stalin! The magnitude of his idea strained even Azeff's enormous conceptual capacities. It meant long nights of work, it meant seeing an unpredictable number of his best friends hauled off to the potash factory, but what were these puny sacrifices compared to the glory of creating the only serious European rival to Oberammergau.

For his hero, Azeff resurrected a second-string prosecutor who once played romantic leads in the Tsarist theater. Now his appearance had deteriorated. He looked like a particularly mean

small town banker anticipating a foreclosure. His thinning grey hair was brushed flatly back from a high square forehead, more impressive and almost as substantial as the false front on a cross-roads general store. Pince-nez squeezed the knifelike bridge of his nose. The tremolo in his actor's voice made all the judges burst into sobbing, the six wax dummies as well as the single speaking part. And when he approached the climax of a peroration, raising his voice to a triumphant shriek, throwing his arms about with such violence that he seemed certain to unzip himself right down his breastbone, and flung himself on one knee facing the box always kept reserved for Stalin, the applause made the roof flap up and down like the gills of an excited goldfish. The continual "Thud, BOOM!" of the bouquets that were hurled at him deafened the spectators and occasionally put out a stenographer's eye.

Azeff had some difficulty hiring the right men for the supporting roles, auditioning almost all of the unpopular members of the Actors' Union before making his final choices. Assembled for their first rehearsal, they were unquestionably the most incompetent group of assassins known to western recorded history. They huddled within the proscenium arch, a shabby, dejected group, tender-hearted, hesitating, morbidly sensitive to public opinion. It took all the audience's spare imagination to picture them as partners in a vast conspiracy, plotting murders with possible fatal results, spurring on the Siberian rainmakers to overproduction, mangling precious grains of stored wheat wherever it looked possible to blame the damage on rats. But to start the ball of suspicion rolling, Azeff had cunningly sprinkled the cast with foreigners, just as shabby and timid but obviously more terrifying than local villains.

More than once, according to Azeff's fast moving program notes, their nefarious plots had teetered on the crumbling edge of success. But just as he cocked the fatal pistol, the German murderer felt a cinder scrape his eyeball. Before it could be dug out, Stalin had hammered home his last repetition and vanished from

the speakers' platform. While the limousine paused invitingly at the corner, the Korean bombthrower halted his arm in confusion. He remembered that he had forgotten to change his underwear that morning. History held its breath while the wily Oriental declined to make his appearance on the autopsy table clad only in a few second-hand handkerchiefs and an editorial from the *Manchester Guardian*. The limousine and the opportunity passed on forever. The bribed fry cook was made so ill by the fumes from the unstoppered acid bottle hung round his neck, that it was months before he could stick his head inside a homicidically important kitchen again.

The sole written copy of the dialogue was entrusted to the prosecutor. He was also responsible for seeing that the action kept moving right along and for the ad libbing during the hiatuses when the other actors blew their lines. Bonuses were paid to relatives in order to encourage cooperation on the part of the defendants. When the prosecutor shouted that one of the accused had directed a million train wrecks, that individual inspiredly leapt to his feet and screamed triumphantly, "Two million by actual count, and all with this little hand." When another was denounced for turning the sour cream a little sourer than was absolutely necessary, the criminal only chortled merrily. The prisoners carried suggestibility to the farthest limits ever seen outside a hypnotist's demonstrations, sometimes admitting to instigating fifteen epidemics in as many seconds. Toward the end, the prosecutor was often unable to get the full text of the indictment out of his mouth before the entire issue was oversubscribed by the helpful criminal. They took a devilish pride in confessing their chief role in encouraging the bad psychological state of the Russian people, especially cherishing the melancholia which started at one end of the steppes just before the end of winter and rolled up the entire nation in one vast jellyroll of gloom. If enthusiasm alone could make great actors, the defendants were the superiors of the Moscow Art Theater. But try as they would, they could never erase the stigma of haphazard-

ness from their testimony. In their confessions, assassins wandered in and out as casually as the customers of a railroad wash-room.

The prosecutor, the spearhead of the proletarian opposition to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, took a sadistic pleasure in comparing the accused to beasts he particularly despised. The prisoners, smiling anxiously, cheerfully agreed to his description of the more lurid details of their private lives. Sometimes they screwed up courage to volunteer unprintable details of their own. So seriously did they absorb his rhetoric that eventually the specimens on display in the prisoners' dock became indistinguishable from the contents of a small zoo.

At one end of the enclosed space, a winded and bedraggled fox morosely licked his fur and snarled unimpressive compliments at the nearest policemen. Next to him, two audibly unwashed goats wagged their lower jaws in ceaseless self-recrimination, while permitting their eyes to hover lustfully over the rounded protuberances on the golden-haired parachute jumper in the front row. A baggy-eyed dachshund, sway-backed beneath the weight of an iron cross, a *croix de guerre*, and eight or nine soviet honors pinned along his spine, yawned tiredly in the foreground. Every few minutes he dutifully elevated his upper lip in a weary snarl, pretending that he wanted nothing better than to bite a few people if only he had gotten a little sleep the night before. A prominent journalist, warmly buttoned into the skin of a motheaten hyena, howled mournfully whenever there was a lull in the proceedings. Roaming wistfully from one end of the box to another, a distinguished scholar, mechanically working himself into his assigned role as a skunk, resembled nothing so much as a man who has mislaid something and is desperately trying to remember what. The rest of the prisoners cackled, howled, grunted, and whinnied, according to their fundamental anti-soviet natures. One overly enthusiastic criminal, pleased at returning to the spotlight after years of picking oakum, did his best to lay an egg every morning. He never succeeded. Nevertheless, a pair of op-

timistic militia men invariably turned up with a tin kettle and a spirit lamp, just in case.

In spite of a venal foreign press, the first trial was a huge success. The Russian newspapers, after an editor or two had been invited to try out for the cast, fearlessly compared Azeff to Aeschylus, Molière, and David Belasco. It was with real regret that Azeff closed the run and paid off the actors' families. But he laid immediate plans for an enlarged second production with road companies sprayed out among the provinces. He labelled it "The Great Treason Trials Carnival, Tent, Dog, and Pony Show" and found a government subsidy immediately forthcoming. Given top billing, with huge canvas backed portraits billowing in the breeze, were a number of first, second, and third grade heroes of the Soviet Union making what was guaranteed to be their final farewell tour. They were supported by the customary gang of wreckers, disruptionists, agents of foreign powers, factory workers whose foremen had it in for them, and a couple of unidentified parties who had just come in to wash their hands.

Only once did the production strike a false note. An insufficiently rehearsed second lead sought to introduce an unnecessary note of pathos by pleading the heroic part he had played in the October Revolution. Without dropping a line, the prosecutor sternly reminded the improviser that: (1) exhaustive study of soviet theatrical program collections and similar sources had failed to reveal any evidence of a production named "The October Revolution"; (2) nobody else in the cast pretended to have taken part in such a play; (3) if the accused seemed to attach such a value to this October Revolution—whatever that long-winded phrase might mean—let him produce it in court by all means. After a suitable pause, during which the October Revolution was not produced in court, the trial went on. The judges admonished the prisoner against any more irresponsible flights of the imagination, and the prosecutor launched into his next speech without further interruption.

Once the second trials were launched, Azeff's theatrical ven-

questioned, but invariably denied the responsibility for the spread of the Evil Eye near Pskoff in the summer of 1926.

With a number of enticing meat sandwiches tucked in odd crannies about his person, Azeff visited the Englishman in his cell. Under Azeff's sympathetic questioning, Ramshackle's British reserve began to thaw. But he fought shy of the lecture tour until Azeff had produced his entire store of sandwiches and promised him an extra bonus of five roast beef and five roast pork for every two hundred customers he drew above his quota. Ramshackle left his cell without a great display of sorrow. Basket making, in spite of the rosy promises of the warden, had always seemed to lack a future. And Azeff was very decent to promise him the support of a piano player and a wide assortment of lantern slides.

Azeff designed an impressive ceremony to mark Ramshackle's reception into the bosom of the faithful. For a while, it was even rumored that Stalin might attend. On the appointed day, the former engineer was marched in, magnificent in stand-up collar, bowler hat, spats, dark coat, and striped trousers. Azeff, looking like a rickety pouter pigeon, read off the ritualized questions. The pregnant silence was broken only by unintelligible paragraphs that seemed to begin, "Do you, Athelstan Plantagenet Ramshackle solemnly . . . ?" and ended with that gentleman's shrill, "I do accept," and, "I do reject." After the questions were finished, a GPU man, wrinkling his nose in delicate distaste, stripped Ramshackle of all his bourgeois regalia. Considerable audience interest was aroused when Ramshackle's underwear edged into view. One prominent official in the textile industry was heard to snort, "I don't believe it." Ramshackle winced beneath the candid gaze of a leading lady librarian, and wistfully watched his last intimate garments born away. Without the trace of a tremor, he donned the symbolic cap, blouse, and boots that marked his soviet rebirth. With a tremendous crash, the military band from the "Ninth Thesis of the Thirteenth Plenum Infantry Regiment" blew an ear destroying fanfare. The affair

ended, all the participants nodded suspiciously at each other and dashed off to their next scheduled committee meetings.

Azeff's hunch was perfect. Wherever he went, Ramshackle packed them in. Local journalists grew ecstatic over his remarkable diction and the obvious sincerity which to some degree made up for the former. Entirely on his own initiative, he added a few card tricks and five minutes of furious juggling to the end of his act. He also hired a muscular blond gymnasium instructress to posture about the stage in tights and hand him the Indian clubs when he gave her the cue. Just as he was thinking of picking up a brunette to balance the act, the secret police received an anonymous note. The document hinted that Ramshackle was stealing and reselling linen from the hotels along his route. They investigated his twenty-four trunks—themselves something of a mystery—and discovered enough towels and sheets to outfit all the guest rooms at the Lubianka. The tour was abruptly cancelled and Ramshackle shipped back to the prison. He bore no malice to anyone, however, and every May Day sent Azeff a beautiful postcard, wishing him all the joys of the season. When last heard of, he was making baskets, if anything, much better than he did before.

The continuous drain on the population for recasting the trials, made taking a serious interest in intellectual matters almost as dangerous as going for a trip on the train. An argument over the relative merits of burnt sienna and burnt umber usually ended with one of the disputants arranging his rebuttal as he walked away between two policemen. Book reviewing was well on the way to becoming as hazardous as it ought to be. Before he even looked at a book, the reviewer had to spend several days worrying whether the author was still considered one of Bolshevism's strongest bulwarks against the ordinary rules of evidence or whether his present whereabouts would only interest an unusually morbid criminologist. Astrologers and soothsayers who claimed to have a stranglehold on numerology seldom starved. For a time, most reviewers religiously based their opinions on a

complicated system that seemed to depend upon the motion of the planets. The first time the planets guessed wrong, the next three weeks' reviews had to be parcelled out among the cooking and sports editors. Nowhere could the harassed critic take a chance, not even with children's books and tracts on gardening. There was a dialectical position on the cutworm, and it was up to the reviewer to root it out.

Many shabby subterfuges were developed by slackers who sought to avoid acting in one of Azeff's road companies. One of the most popular was obtaining a certificate from a psychiatrist which read, "I hereby certify and affirm that Comrade (name to be inserted) has neither the mental health or the intellectual ability to be useful to the enemies of the Revolution." Imbecility became so popular that parents regarded it as a biological duty to batter in the fontanelles of their infants, ambitious for the meaningless smile that heralded the damaged mind. One happy mother in the Urals managed to send all 11 of her children to homes for the feeble minded. But the government's keen eye soon noticed the suspicious rise in the number of the mentally incompetent. The GPU was ordered to decimate insane asylums every few months on general principles.

With the trials more popular in Russia than drinking tea out of glasses, it was only a question of time before the germ of treason would come and camp in Azeff's tissues. Hitherto he had happily basked in the glory of being the second most undistinguished man in Russia. Now he yearned for the personal spotlight of the courtroom, the exposed position on the prisoners' dock, the movement of all eyes toward him as he leaned forward to watch the prosecutor's probing finger flick his reputation into pieces as easily as it would a rotten toadstool. He wanted to boast of his horrid crimes, while the audience's faces blanched in fear.

The authorities first became suspicious of Azeff when a coolness between him and his shadow turned into open warfare. He delivered public tirades against this inoffensive imitation of himself, accusing it openly of belonging to one of the Trotskyite anti-

soviet centers that long ago had succeeded the YMCA as places of popular entertainment. He insisted on informing his friends that nothing which disappeared as quickly as his shadow when the sun went down could be of good moral character. He shot at the trembling blob of darkness with his old Civil War pistol, until it became so shabby and disgraceful that Intourist asked him to keep it off the streets when visitors were around. Finally, convinced beyond all subjective doubt of his shadow's treachery, he inflicted upon it the most severe and devastating punishment permissible under Comintern rules, far worse than mere pistol-lining or pickaxing. After the most seriously inward spiritual searching, he broke off all personal relations with his shadow. It still followed him about as before, battle-scarred and doggedly amiable. But even strangers could tell that its heart was broken. The skinny outline of shade loitered about the streets for days, homesick for the scrawny figure it had followed. Whenever it came into a dining room where Azeff was finishing his meal, he might choke a little into his food for old time's sake. But mustering all his resources, he managed to turn his head away like a true Bolshevik.

Nobody ever questioned Azeff's essential loyalty to the party. His patriotism had become a legend among the people. Passers-by pointed him out to each other with admiration as they said, "There goes a comrade whose loyalty rating has just jumped to seventh place for all the autonomous republics. Last night they woke him out of a sound sleep to tell him the building was on fire. Before they could begin to explain, he recanted his heretical ideas about platinum production in the Urals, dictated a thousand word statement confessing an unspecified number of further crimes, and named thirty thousand accomplices. To make sure of his beliefs, he recanted at least seven times, leaving the surplus in reserve for future use. Then he insisted that he was too contemptible and verminous a traitor for the ordinary death penalty and demanded that he be smeared with honey and staked out on an anthill. What a superb patriot!"

The day before he was arrested, Azeff wrote a magnificent editorial against himself. Imaginative, funny, composed of a vocabulary that turned the paper blue and scorched by turns, it occupies a justly high place in world literature. Tons of resolutions from grateful Communist organizations poured in. "Your knowledge of the human heart," a well known jurist wrote, "is amazing. How well you understand this delicate subject." Within a week he had received no less than seventeen proposals of marriage, including a cabled one from an aged benefactress of the party in Capetown. Young writers flooded him with appeals for advice on problems of style. A worried father whose son was beginning to smoke cigarets wrote asking Azeff to make it plain that his political downfall was due solely to an unwise indulgence in nicotine.

At his trial, Azeff was no less superb. Every morning a glass of milk was placed in the dock before him. By noon on the first day, and consistently earlier every day thereafter, his twitching gaze had churned the milk into fine butter. This firmly established him as a suspicious character. He began his statement by informing the judges, in a tremulous voice which barely managed to get past the gap where two good teeth had been the day before, that he was unquestionably the worst man who ever lived. What was more, he had the papers to prove it. Much to his sorrow, during the coal shortage of the previous winter he had deceitfully stuffed them into the fireplace in order to keep warm. Even as a baby he had succeeded in being a menace to decent society. His first few years on earth were devoted to spreading a number of intestinal diseases among his playmates, most of whom died. As an adolescent he specialized in the most vicious pranks, burning the crops of the poorer and middle peasants and desecrating the Russian flag. He joined the Bolshevik Party solely to increase his pay as a secret agent of an unnamed Third Reich.

Not until his treasonous activities threw him into the company of Trotsky, however, did he sink to the depths of depravity.

The court might be pleased to hear the curious circumstances surrounding his last—and accidental—meeting with the arch traitor. They had stumbled upon each other in the streets of Louisville, Kentucky, at the height of the recent floods. For some hours they conferred in the lobby of a popular hotel, at that time eight feet under water. Fortunately, both were wearing diving helmets. Trotsky had just come from the home of an impoverished aristocrat and carried the family silver slung over his shoulder in a sack. Azeff had spent the afternoon smashing the toys that children had left behind when they fled the rising waters. They found themselves in perfect agreement on all major issues. The entire conversation was conducted in gestures, but gestures of such a cynical and disgusting nature that Azeff could not possibly bring himself to repeat them before a mixed audience.

On the nature of his anti-soviet plots, Azeff was as vague as the most imaginative prosecutor could desire. But he did insist upon taking full personal responsibility for all the murders and sabotage, as well as the annoyances and petty disappointments of Russian daily life. "Whether I knew about them or not," he snarled, "I was heartily in favor of them. The poor deluded creatures who wrecked trains and secretly frayed their neighbors' shoelaces acted only under my personal instructions. I did not commit these crimes for money. My salary from the Gestapo alone was sufficient for my ordinary needs and such luxuries as socks and soap. My treasonous career was motivated solely by my personal jealousy of Stalin and the success of the 1932 famine. If the GPU had not caught me in time, I would have completed my plans for halting the rotation of the earth and leaving the Soviet Union on the side away from the sun. My only sorrow is my knowledge that no punishment within the power of this court is painful enough to make amends for my perfidy. I can but rely on the genius of the Russian people and hope that it will provide something sufficiently gruesome."

Azeff's own trial was the greatest theatrical success in Russian history. Instead of having him shot, like his fellow Thespians,

the government saved him for repeat performances. He set the official record for the longest theatrical run. As late as 1939 there was talk of reviving him for the summer season.

Theaterwise, Azeff carefully varied his material. At the gala three hundredth performance, Azeff interpolated a speech which revealed how Trotsky had been responsible for the world wide economic depression. The governments of Germany, Great Britain, and France went bankrupt because the enormous subsidies granted Trotsky's insatiable secret service had unbalanced their budgets beyond hope of recovery. To celebrate his four hundredth appearance, Azeff improvised a number of personal reminiscences which sounded so attractive that there was a regrettable increase in sexual aberrations.

Nothing lasts forever. After the prosecutor who looked like a small town banker had been carried out, kicking and screaming and demanding that somebody take quick action to save the Soviet Union from his unholy machinations, the purgers found that they had run out of available material. Azeff saw the end was near. He ended his run in Sevastopol, wiped the grey greasepaint off his face, and raised the slogan, "Purge the purgers." This was precisely what the country wanted, but within three months there was another dearth of material. So Azeff dauntlessly raised the next inevitable slogan, "Purge the purgers of the purgers." The last-named lasted only six weeks. Just as Azeff was about to proceed to his next logical slogan, the pact with Germany was signed. Azeff's projected slogan seemed too futile even to him, and he glumly watched the Trotskyite treason trials enter the limbo of the hereafter, hand in hand with pyrography and china painting.

Azeff knew that Stalin signed the pact with Hitler because he wanted to cut Trotsky off from any contact with the rest of the world, animal, vegetable, or mineral. Going into a partnership with his rival's chief backer, left the renegade with no principles, no allies, no subsidy, and only a limited mailing list. It was so simple, Azeff wondered why nobody had thought of it before.

Azeff, now at leisure, was chosen to create the political slogans for 1940's May Day. This required a surplus of tact, for the world had revolved remarkably since the banners and blown up photographs last waved across Red Square. For the main slogan of the previous year, "Down with Hitler," Azeff managed to substitute the more politically precise "Breathe Deeply." The second, "Long Live Dimitroff, the Spearhead of World Democracy" was shoved into the unused back end of a letter file and supplanted by, "Long Live Exercise in the Open Air." The four exclamation points which followed the extremely popular, "Smash the Fascist Wreckers and the Allies of the World Counter-Revolution! ! ! !" Azeff first transformed into question marks. This seemed unnecessarily definite, so he changed the exclamation points into asterisks which referred to a footnote beginning, "*****not running on weekdays, Sundays, holidays, or between the hours of 12M and 12M."

May Day over, Azeff was able to devote all his efforts to his job as an advisory member of the Committee to Encourage the Apotheosis of Stalin. Here was a promotion job so insoluble that many cleverer functionaries had deliberately passed up opportunities to get in on the ground floor. The press agents who thought up touching stories about the love of the common people for Lenin faced a far simpler task. Their hero was dead and on permanent public exhibit. Stalin was alive and active, almost unnecessarily so, it seemed to Azeff at times.

More imperceptibly than the evidence of a defective sewage system, the Stalin myth had permeated Russian life. Soon after the October Revolution, when he was not yet entitled to a separate caption on photographs of more than three people, Stalin himself sent up the first trial balloon. He dropped pointed hints that he could spit farther and straighter than any other man in Soviet Russia. If someone had asked for a demonstration, the whole affair would have stopped there. Dizzy with success, he began to hand out little cards labelled, "Joseph—'Honest Joe'—Stalin. Guaranteed to be the One and Only Genuine Pupil of

Marx, Engels, and Lenin. Plant in Operation at the Present Time. Inspection Invited."

Seizing the most available antithesis by the horns, Stalin went on to make certain necessary revisions in the basis of Marxist theory. He announced with startled pride that it was called "dialectical materialism" because it was both "dialectical" and "materialistic." He revealed how he had come to an understanding of the fundamental contradictions which were concealed in the dialectic when he met himself coming home as he was going to work one morning.

In the beginning, cheap reproductions of the faces of Lenin and Trotsky had monopolized all of the available Russian wall-space. Azeff, who climbed aboard the bandwagon when there were not enough instruments to carry three parts, spent many an evening hastening through the darkened streets, pasting up pictures of Stalin on lonely telegraph poles and in deserted doorways. Later, he devised a variety of schemes for familiarizing the masses with the face of their future leader. Peasants gratefully accepted lithographs of Stalin's face when they came wrapped around a cake of soap. It was simple food but nourishing. Crews of men loitered around schoolyards, handing out bits of candy and pocket-sized halftones of Stalin. Adolescent girls stared endlessly at their reflections in the small round mirrors which were backed up by a charcoal drawing of the great man. This helped, but when a minor commissar began to manufacture a Stalin cigaret which was actually rumored to be ten per cent tobacco, the deluge began.

Within a few short months, Stalin's face seemed more ubiquitous than the weather. An imitation oil portrait dangled in the old ikon corner of the peasants' huts, outshining in sheer abuse of reds, blues, and sanctity the ousted images of the saints. In better perspective, nobler looking, he hung upon the walls of state buildings, protected from the common touch by frames of gilt and glass. Gardeners sweated in the parks as they rearranged the geraniums into reasonable likenesses of his image. More adamant

than the workers' bread, his craggy, short-headed profile juttied out from plaques and medals. His moustache, bristling like a Mongol horsetail banner, was centrally located in a thousand artists' reconstructions of the battle of Tsaritsyn. Busts, ranging from the cheap pewter machine-made variety to the expensive *objets d'art* fashioned by the loving hands of sympathetic foreign sculptresses, took the place of books on the shelves of a million libraries. The infantry barracks were familiar with an heroic Stalin who fired a machine gun with one hand as he urged his comrades on to KP duty with the other. In athletic locker rooms, his bronze image put the shot and pole vaulted. Bakery workers were spurred on to new heights of production by a flour-dusted image of a Stalin whose flailing arms were stuck in dough up to his collar bones. Cavalrymen looked up from their bunks at a Stalin who easily curried two horses at the same time or gloriously led a cavalry charge without either hand touching the reins. The poets' Stalin had eyes as limpid as a forest pool in January. The steel workers' inspiration bulged with muscles that appeared to have been laid on with a steam shovel.

Everywhere the eye retreated, it fell upon Stalin as a boy, as a man, as an adolescent, as a father, looking as though he wanted to be a mother (this for maternity ward consumption only), as a bacteriologist, as a parachute jumper, as an Arctic explorer, as Lenin's best pupil, as Lenin's only teacher, as the first disciple of Marx and Engels, and finally, in a dual role, as Marx laying down the law to Engels. His features were incised on stone drainspouts, scribbled on wayside rocks, and sprayed through the heavens by wandering sky writers. Scattered along the country roads were a million wayside shrines, casting a welcome shade as they sheltered little wooden images of Stalin. Here the wayfarer could munch his bread and sip his tea, bathed in the peace to which understanding was not even a whistle stop.

Stalin's official biography expanded faster than a suburban housewife's silhouette under the benign influence of milk chocolate. More and more the October Revolution came to be con-

sidered the personal achievement of one man and only a part time job at that. Photographs of early Bolshevik meetings which had somehow missed including Stalin's features were branded as spurious and destroyed. The remainder were retouched. The pompadour that shot sturdy roots down into the middle of the fecund moustache was highlighted into the center of all group pictures. Purged colleagues were blurred off into anonymity. But photography smacked too much of anti-socialist realism. Painters were the only historians who possessed the scope to provide an adequate record of Stalin's role in history.

The historical school in Russian painting climaxed its agitational career by an enormous collective mural which showed Stalin as Dialectics and Azeff as Materialism urging the first progressive fish up out of the water on to the land.

Very popular among the reading public was a little book of Stalin's pithiest sayings which Azeff edited. The printing bill paid for itself because Azeff changed the color of the booklet's cover every six months. Word was quickly passed down the line that every loyal functionary needed ten thousand copies of the new edition lying around the house for emergencies. Several of the maxims achieved an immediate permanency in Russian folk speech. Who can ever forget the accurate insight of, "He whom the shoe fits—is a speculator"; "When many people are out of work you have a condition often described as unemployment"; "Socialism needs but one more factor to win the victory—Success"; and the cold surgical preciseness of, "Comrades, we must face the facts. Beginning in 1939—there was a war."

Just as the Bolshevik Party towered over all purely human institutions, so did *lèse majesté* against Stalin surpass all other crimes. No Russian jurist could imagine a fouler deed than addressing Stalin in a cursory, niggling way, screaming out "Hey you!" or "You over there with the moustache, can't you watch where you're going?" According to rigid protocol, Stalin could only be addressed in simple, sincere proletarian speech. Azeff distributed a pamphlet carrying a few samples. Most popular were,

"You, leading comrade, brightest thesis on the current program of the universe," and, "You, little father secretary, most shining dues' stamp on the cosmic membership card."

Gradually, as Azeff pulled the propaganda strings, Stalin's role as the world's best organizer faded into the background and he was promoted to the rank of universal genius. Azeff took special pride in nourishing the rumor that Stalin's speeches were a complete repository of all human knowledge and the best guide as to what would be discovered in the future. The sheer novelty of the idea caught on.

In history alone, Stalin's learning was more extensive and precise than the annual freight carloadings of the All-Russian History Institute. Merely by running the edge of an ancient manuscript beneath his nose and sniffing gently he could date any disputed document to within three weeks. It was years since he had needed to read a book. His thought processes had become so muscular that knowledge was sucked into them when a book was brought into the room. His physical ability did not lag behind. He was accepted as the skillfulest plumber, the best man for both the sprints and distance running, the greatest musician in Russia. On his office walls hung framed resolutions from both iron-molders and gynaecologists, certifying that Stalin's contributions to their arts surpassed even the wildest dreams of amateurs.

So rapid was the leader's intellectual and physical development that Azeff was compelled to create a new Commissariat, consisting of thirteen geniuses and three hundred stenographers. The geniuses did nothing but invent new fields of human activity for Stalin to be the supreme master of. The stenographers wrote out the certificates, engraved the diplomas and falsified the records generally.

By osmotic processes—too well known to discuss here—Stalin entered into his third stage. Before the awestruck eyes of the Russian people he steadily became less and less of a human being and more of a convenient means by which the average man could

identify himself with omnipotence, universality, and five or six of the more striking manifestations familiar to meteorologists. Like the ether, he was assumed to pervade everything. He had long ago resigned such childish occupations as throwing open the switch on the track to socialism or cold-rolling the plates of the world revolution. Now he busied himself with the fundamental, eternal tasks, causing the birds to sing and the seasons to maintain some semblance of discipline.

Azeff quietly let it be understood that Stalin was now willing to accept full responsibility for all the good things that had ever been done in Russia. To make sure that credit was given where credit was due he set up the All-Union Commission for the Certification of Miracles Accomplished by Stalin. A prize contest was initiated, offering ten thousand rubles for the most printable letter describing the exact way in which Comrade Stalin had intervened for the better in the life of the writer. The Commission was swamped by testimonials. Medically, Azeff soon boasted, the mere mention of Stalin's name had cured every known disease with the possible exception of malnutrition. In Baku, wise oilworkers saved copies of Stalin's pamphlets, knowing that nothing else in the world would smother a burning oil well faster. When the first car off the assembly line at the Rostoff on Don automobile factory refused to budge, shoving a portrait of Stalin at the headlights and screaming "Boo" started the carburetor bubbling like a hookah at a convention of Turkish conservatives. When a second portrait was produced, the automobile, although no gas was in the tank, sprinted down the road for seven miles before the connecting rods fell out. And even the camels, the proud and sullen aristocrats of the Mongolian deserts, became as docile as an editor the day before payday when Stalin's name was shouted in their ears.

The great man's sixtieth birthday occurred about the time the Red Army reluctantly forced itself to quell an invasion launched by the power-drunk Finnish imperialists. No soviet editor permitted himself the slightest doubt as to which was the most im-

portant. The war news was tucked away among the personal notices on the back page, in a two line item which read, "Will pay valuable premiums, including cigarets, for old iron, rags, and news of the Russian eighteenth division." The remainder of the paper contained birthday greetings and discussions of Stalin's role in Five Year Plans one to forty-five, inclusive.

The most generally admired birthday eulogy began, "Sweated workers at Wormwood Scrubbs, oppressed minorities at Ossining, semi-colonial ctenophores groaning beneath a relentlessly increasing pressure at the bottom of the sea, grains of pollen soaring high above the clouds in an unconquerable struggle for freedom, Sumatra rubber trees, drained and exploited by foreign concessionaires, the Giant Panda, fleeing before the march of imperialism in China, all look only to Stalin for hope and directives in their day to day activity."

Upon reading this passage, Stalin himself was so moved that he laid his pipe down and issued an official statement saying that if any of the aforementioned individuals were in need of red blood corpuscles, leucocytes, or a letter to a friend in the city hall, they need only call on him. He stood ready at any time to donate freely vital parts of his personal apparatus to any and all of the world oppressed that lived more than three thousand miles from Moscow.

At the official birthday celebration rites, Stalin was awarded the highest honors available to the generous impulses of a grateful people. By official decree he was transformed into the mountain eagle of Bolshevism—pinfeathers were handed around to prove this point—and the eighteen greatest men in human history. The legend was retold how, in the darkest night, while all Moscow creaked against the bedsprings, Stalin strolled through the deserted streets, twisting doorknobs and sniffing for leaky gas jets. In an impressive ceremony, a delegation from the Young Pioneers also bestowed upon him the known physical attributes of the sun, the highest Asiatic mountain ranges, and the leguminous plants.

The tiny two room cottage where the future cosmic force bubbled his initial, "Now, Comrades, what does this mean?" was turned into a national shrine. The original birthplace had been destroyed by its own inner contradictions shortly after Stalin's parents moved out. The first replica was injudiciously erected in a village far from the nearest transportation. After two bad seasons it was officially dismantled as tourist attraction. The current and flourishing edition was built just outside the heart of a great Russian railroad center, easily accessible by bus or bicycle. To cooperate with authenticity, a nearby village has been renamed "Georgia." This veritable birthplace is by far the most popular center of tourist travel, outpulling the tomb of Lenin by about three to one except on rainy days. A gold and marble pavilion, an enlarged version of Mammoth Cave, shelters the tiny cottage from all the elements within a radius of five miles. Admission is extremely moderate, amounting to about two weeks' wages for the average worker. The sandwich and samovar concessions are operated by Stalin's eldest son. By using a slicing machine adjusted by a micrometer and renovating his tea bricks once a month in the nearest tanyard, the young man has acquired a modest competency. Within the next ten years his father expects him to be drawing interest on a considerable portion of the national debt.

To symbolize the sturdy working class nature of the soviet state, only the most precious materials are used in the interior of the cottage. The humble cooking pots hanging in the fireplace are cleverly blackened aluminum. Jewelled Easter eggs, sole negotiable memorabilia of the Romanoffs, are used for door-stops. Elaborately worm eaten woods, the envy of every wealthy lover of bric-a-brac, are worked up into the rough framework of the tables and chairs. The upholstery is warm and serviceable, inexpensive workaday vicuna or fluffy chinchilla. The ikon in the corner is the finest extant example of Byzantine art, carefully and lovingly restored. To heighten the effect of the pigments, its entire surface is covered with a thin scum of jewels and semi-

precious stones. Ruby lips, alabaster brows, pearly teeth, shell-like ears, jet-black hair, and coral cheeks are only part of the portrait ensemble. The ikon is considered even more valuable however, because by some miracle, the unknown saint whom it portrays appears as a middle-aged, heavy-moustached, low-pompadoured, short-headed, stocky man, remarkably attired in a humble private's jacket.

Perhaps the effort of pushing aside half a skyful of constellations to make room for Stalin used up Azeff's last spiritual reserves. He seemed to lose his grip and the greater part of his mental baggage. The pact with Hitler added to his confusion. He even forgot to attend his scheduled committee meetings. All day long he tottered aimlessly about the Moscow sidewalks, looking for the remnants of an anti-fascism that was as dead as Lenin and far less presentable. His sole remaining interest, the Committee to Encourage the Apotheosis of Stalin, decided that it had misread the tempo of historical development and began a strategic retreat intended to restrict its claims to the immediate vicinity of the solar system. For the first time, German was spoken openly in Moscow by men whose passports were in good order. It was a new era, and Azeff somehow had fallen off the railroad train of destiny.

As the days passed, Azeff became more and more convinced that a great Nazi plot was being hatched against the socialist fatherland. Shocked at the apparent official laxity, he began to take immediate steps for home defense. Whenever he heard the German oil expert impose his Teutonic gutturals upon the melodious rise and fall of the Russian tongue, he made a beeline for the nearest police station. There he happily denounced the foreigner as a spy. At first, according to the good old custom, the Germans were shot before they could finish reciting their official titles. Not unnaturally, the Nazi embassy objected. The desk sergeant decided to compromise by holding the prisoners until Azeff had gone on his way. Then he released them with an official apology. Toward the end, Azeff was taking up more police

time than Trotsky's relatives. The GPU could no longer disguise the fact. Azeff had become a public nuisance.

A few words were passed at the committee meetings that Azeff now neglected as sternly as he once did a liberal's protests. His vigorous anti-Nazi campaign was beginning to endanger the fine flower of friendship between the two great socialist states. The leaders took the position that Azeff was no longer worth executing, even as an example. Given the right circumstances, he might do as a martyr and a hero. The funeral arrangements were quickly completed. One clear, starlit night, a Russian aviator dropped Azeff instead of a bomb on a Finnish working class district. An energetic Bolshevik to the last, Azeff demolished a baby carriage, started an epidemic of the common cold, and burned down a postoffice.

No cautious historian would dare speculate as to whether an hypertrophied self-interest or a superbly natural equipment to believe almost anything dominated Azeff's long loyalty to the party. He approached Marxism with one eye directed outward to the Main Chance, the other focussed severely inward on the Things Which Are Not So. By a strong effort, he finally succeeded in identifying the party with what seemed important in the lives of most men. To Azeff the Bolshevik apparatus was synonymous with truth, goodness, beauty. In addition it paid a salary. In public he graciously submitted to his reputation as a charter member of the legion of supermen. In private, he used to admit that his main talent was an ability to sit twice as long at any committee meeting as his opponents and a readily detachable stomach lining made of chrome tanned oxhide. Not until late in life did he get around to believing in his own official biography.

Azeff is not yet completely forgotten in Russia, unless they discover a new malevolent foreign power whose agent they would like to think he was. The latest estimate of his career was best expressed by a speaker at the memorial services. "Azeff Azeffovitch Wischmeier," the orator said, "has given us the inspiring

example of a life devoted to one, long, ceaseless struggle against revisionism, chauvinism, impossibilism, exceptionalism, liquidationism, sectionalism, petty bourgeois tendencies, dissension, objectivism, sabotage, criticism, pessimism, ultra-leftism, defeatism, callow optimism, subjectivism, social-fascism, imperialism, rightist deviations, rotten liberalism, terrorism, Populism, putschism, Menshevism, Blanquism, syndicalism, shallow intellectualism, empirio-criticism, Machism, Luxemburgism, Kautskyism, Austro-Marxism, Brandlerism, Gorterism, khvostism, indiscipline, panic, and hysteria."

PARIS AND HELEN
AN ENTERTAINMENT
BY
DELMORE SCHWARTZ

Inscribed to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer

CAST OF CHARACTERS

PARIS: Robert Montgomery

HELEN: Madeleine Carroll

VENUS: Greta Garbo, Myrna Loy, Hedy Lamarr,
Dame May Whitty, alternately

HECTOR: Spencer Tracy

PRIAM: LEWIS STONE

AITHRE: JOAN BENNETT

KLYMENE: Alice Faye

*"The goddess softly shook her silken vest,
That shed perfumes, and whispering thus addressed:
'Haste, happy nymph! for thee thy Paris calls,
Safe from the fight, in yonder lofty walls,
Fair as a god; with odours round him spread,
He lies and waits thee on the well-known bed;
Not like a warrior parted from the foe,
But some gay dancer in the public show.'
She spoke, and Helen's secret soul was moved;
She scorn'd the champion, but the man she loved...."*

ILIAD III (Pope)

PARIS AND HELEN

AN ENTERTAINMENT

Enter Dramatist and Producer before the curtain.

PRODUCER:

Now how about a hit which runs for years,
Which runs as long as "Abie's Irish Rose,"
"Tobacco Road," or "Hamlet"?

DRAMATIST:

O, I would like to write one, *if I could!*
A strong play: permanently interesting
Like a lake near a small city, used for swimming
And boating in the summer; ski-ing and skating
In winter; by parked lovers all year long
—But how can I compete with whores of the mind,
So dominant upon The Great White Way,
Sleeping with all the ticket agencies?

PRODUCER:

Come now, those are strong words. Apply yourself,
You're flesh and blood just like the rest of us,
Think of what all minds like, and make it move,
—I'll make it worth your while: you bet I will,
And who knows, you may make a small fortune,
Crowned by Pulitzer, called by Hollywood.

DRAMATIST:

I'm flesh and blood just like the rest of you:
You touch me there. Not with extrinsic medals,
But with a humanist appeal. It's true,
The great ones really moved among the people,
Yet sang aloud matchless immortal verse!

PRODUCER:

Why must it be a play in verse? What good
Is that? Get to the point, I always say,

Prose is the quickest way from mind to mind,
And speed is best: *we have no time to lose—*

DRAMATIST:

The function of the meter is to heighten
Attention to the words as such,
The function of the meter is to strengthen
The power of the words so that they flow
Into each other and create fresh sense,
Or hang like robes, fluent about the body,
Letting the meaning have its varied way—

PRODUCER:

All right, enough of theory and ideas. The verse
Might be a novelty. But what's the story,
The story is the thing that brings the crowds,—
Standing room only, tickets weeks ahead—

DRAMATIST:

What else is there to do but live again
All the old stories, asking what they mean,
The usual thing among the clerks and prophets,
In most societies, but in our own
More necessary, more to the point because
So many *weltanschauungen* present
A certain cogency, equal appeal—

PRODUCER:

I thought you'd give me something new to show?

DRAMATIST:

It is a paradox like Life itself
That only through the old we gain the new,
Originality creates itself
From imitation as the past creates
The future by inherited traditions,
inherited techniques,
This is the meaning of the Fifth Commandment,
Honor your father and your mother,
honor your past!

PRODUCER:

Ideas, ideas: but how about your story?

DRAMATIST:

Homeric Troy: a long long time ago,
The very early morning of Western culture,
—Delicate light dwells freshly on all things,
Light delicate and strong on ancient Troy—

PRODUCER:

O what will hold the audience's attention?
Roosevelt's second election is the last
Thing they remember in the distant past!
And who can blame them? After all, how much
Has happened, how much has died, nations
Have fallen since 1935, which seems
A hundred years ago, another life!

DRAMATIST:

O you know what will hold their weak attention!
Just take one guess! the wincing wound of wounds,
Sex, guaranteed to hold the interest
Of men condemned to death. Even the dead
Prick up their ears, ignore the obscene worm,
When sexual congress is the story's nub—

It is a time of war, the usual thing
Where the famous human heart is used.

Some say

The war's about a girl. And some suppose
The prime factor which began the fight
Is the sea-tax, *simpliciter*, impressed
On ships that pass the Trojan coast, whose walls
High, blunt, and numb, declare in stony terms,
Dominion of the sea and of the harbor
—What can this mean to us? What can it mean
But the famous human heart, subjected here
To definite conditions, not like ours,

And yet somewhat like ours.

Lust, love,
Greed, anger, hatred, plain pugnacity,
The most familiar motives here are seen
Always at work.

The heart is like a zoo,
It seems, when seen in the dark theatre,
or outside—

PRODUCER:

Is all this platitude quite necessary?
The audience is waiting for the play—
(*Impatient claps from the audience.*)

DRAMATIST:

Will you let me do this in my own way?
(*To the audience*)

Never mind him, a necessary evil
—Anyway, here we are, as if we were
In the park zoo on Sunday afternoons,
This is the very least, this trope, the zoo,
The very minimum of my assumption,
Or at a circus or a sporting contest,
But if a sporting contest, it is true
One loses and one wins. Here all of us
Win and all lose. The mind alone wins all,
Or let's say in a book. But any book
May be a bottomless and formless pit,
A life or a vacation or a group
Of dangerous mountains,

climbing on hands and knees—

PRODUCER (*Who has been signing his despair to the audience*):
O, if he would begin. For now he sounds
Like a lecture tour!

Where does he think he is?

DRAMATIST (*Changing his attitude and going to the right side of
the stage as the producer goes to the left and the curtain rises*):

Draw up the characters

Stiff with glory,

Helen, her Paris-self,

Her self among women,

her self before Hector,

her famous self

Stiff with glory,

yet underneath, like sex,

The beating heart, the warm body—

Enough: back to the poetry of statement,

—The curtain rises now, the walls of Troy

Are broad enough to walk on. Here the people

Regard their soldiers, now and then, at war

—Come out to look when free as if this were

A building in the process of construction—

And not the death of husbands and of fathers—

(Enter a bevy of old men, pathetic and limping. From the ramparts, they look out on the battlefield, the plains of Troy.)

1ST OLD MAN: Today is going to be a big day—

2ND OLD MAN: Perhaps today the war will be ended—

3RD OLD MAN: No, do not deceive yourself. It will not be ended today, tomorrow or the next day. Wars are not ended by a duel between two individuals.

2ND OLD MAN: You never can tell. Perhaps this war will be. Perhaps this war will be ended in a different way.

3RD OLD MAN: Don't be foolish! Even if Paris loses to Menelaus, he will not give up Helen. No one would give her up, if he once had her.

2ND OLD MAN: After all, documents have been signed, saying in black and white that the loser, Menelaus or Paris, has to surrender Helen to the winner and the war is then declared over—

3RD OLD MAN: I have seen Helen too many times. I know that no one would give up that beauty, if he once had her.

1ST OLD MAN: That is what you said a moment ago, but I suppose it bears repetition. She is very beautiful—

DRAMATIST:

Helen! famed in the Western mind forever,
Like Eve, Delilah, Cleopatra,
Many another round girl tied to flesh
Luminous as a thousand chandeliers!
Echoing sex as a mirror echoes light!

3RD OLD MAN: She is like a goddess. No goddess is more beautiful. I would give everything I have, old as I am, I would even give my life to sleep with her!

2ND OLD MAN: That's why Paris wants to keep his life, so that he can continue to sleep with her—

1ST OLD MAN: Let us speak less of a clear impossibility, namely, sleeping with Helen. What time was the contest supposed to begin?

2ND OLD MAN: They never begin on time any more! They will probably begin sometime during the afternoon—

DRAMATIST:

Spectators, tourists, paid admissions,
These old men have no more to do, but look,
Comment, regard, bemoan,

quite powerless,

And yet they register the action's fullness—

Because they are somewhat apart from it—

Because they're old, because the past knows more—

3RD OLD MAN: Do you know what I heard? A little page boy in the palace, my neighbor's grandnephew, works afternoons in the palace of Paris and Helen. He looked in the key hole one afternoon. Do you know what he said?

1ST OLD MAN: What did he say? Don't keep us waiting.

3RD OLD MAN: He said, "And they whipped me for putting my finger in my nose in company!" Just think of that. He would not say what he saw, all he would say was, "And they whipped me for putting my finger in my nose!"

DRAMATIST:

This sentence, this quotation is obscene,

—Gives rise in the sexual imagination
To infinite reflections and ideas.
Even men old as that rise at the thought:
But I will not apologize for it—

2ND OLD MAN: It is enough to make me wish that I was young again.

3RD OLD MAN: You would not have Helen, no matter how young you were.

2ND OLD MAN: I would get one of her handmaids or servant girls, and with my eyes shut I would make believe she was Helen, keeping the image of Helen clear in my mind—

DRAMATIST:

Sex is a king of men; perhaps I should say
A queen of men; a monarch, anyway,
The heroine of many thrilling stories,
Many ruined lives, and every generation,
Many a sickness, many a sweet sensation—

4TH OLD MAN: I am glad that the time of sexual desire is over for me. It was degrading, it was beneath the dignity of a rational being: what clumsiness, what heavy breathing, like a sick horse! Yet I admit that Helen might make me forget such thoughts, even now—

3RD OLD MAN: Paris knows that and that is why he ran away from Menelaus after the battle lines were formed. I thought Hector would kill him on the spot!

2ND OLD MAN: I am surprised he did not kill him—

3RD OLD MAN: One of the soldier boys on the front line told me what they said to each other. Hector cried out that he wished Paris had never been born. 'You are unbelievable!' Hector said, 'How can a coward like you have kidnapped a beautiful woman from a far country, bringing her back to be a lasting illness upon your people and your country.' While Hector said this, he held Paris by the scruff of the neck, like a picked up cat. But Paris was smart; otherwise he would be dead by now. He answered his brother Hector, saying in flattery: 'You are as

strong as an axe which cuts the beams for a ship's timber. *You are afraid of nothing.* That is your *métier*, your *forte* (pardon the unintended pun!) so to speak. But I have other gifts, the gifts of Venus. Don't be contemptuous of them, or *of any gift of a divinity*. If you want, I will have a personal duel with Menelaus tomorrow to decide who is going to keep Helen.'

2ND OLD MAN: That was a clever answer. If he had said anything else, Hector would have killed him *on the spot*. But perhaps he has outsmarted himself. For he has merely postponed the issue. Today he must fight Menelaus who is strong as a lion, they say—

4TH OLD MAN: The whole incident shows what an advantage the weak and the evil have over the strong and the virtuous. They can appeal to their strength and their virtue. They can use and abuse the highest values with their tongues. The strong and the virtuous cannot.

DRAMATIST: He is quite right. It is a somber thought,
A morbid thought. It illustrates how hard
It is to be a good man, when the weak
Make goodness evil with the strength of goodness,
—Thus Iago used Othello's self-respect,
Thus by his pity many a man is ruined—

3RD OLD MAN: I wonder how the beautiful Helen can endure the wickedness of the slick clever shallow Paris.

2ND OLD MAN: They say she spends her time sewing and weaving a great purple web with two folds, on which are shown many of the battles fought on these plains during these years between the Greeks and Trojans—

DRAMATIST:
What a symbol! what a revelation,
As if she took the war that men endured,
Because of her great beauty, like a picture:

what a girl!

(Enter at right Helen and her two handmaidens, Aithre and Klymene.)

3RD OLD MAN: There she is now! Have you ever seen anyone more beautiful?

4TH OLD MAN: Although it is impious to say so, I would venture to say that not even Venus is more beautiful.

AIITHRE (*To Klymene, at the other end, while Helen stands, as if transfixed, looking at the plains of Troy*): She is full of longing for her husband Menelaus, her city, her parents, her people.

KLYMENE: Who knows what she is thinking? No one knows what goes on in the heart and mind of one who is chained to so beautiful a body.

DRAMATIST: Nostalgia is the easiest emotion,
Helen must suffer it, despite her beauty,
I say, despite her beauty because her beauty
Is a present presence and a vivid glory
Which might make one forget all other things—
Drown like Narcissus in silk water's face—

1ST OLD MAN: When you look at Helen, you can hardly blame the Trojans and Greeks for fighting the longest of wars.

2ND OLD MAN: One cannot distinguish her from a goddess.

3RD OLD MAN: She is the most beautiful woman I have ever seen.
But let her go away.

1ST OLD MAN: Beautiful as she is, let her go away from us, go back to the ships, not destroy our children and our city, nor waste our old age in a long war, so that no one pays any attention to us. Let her go back, let her disappear from every mind and every heart.

DRAMATIST:

Or as the modern poet wrote so well,
Putting old Greek into modern English,
“Let her go back to the ships,
Back among Grecian faces, lest evil come on our own,
Evil and further evil, and a curse cursed on our children,
Moves, yes, she moves like a goddess,
And has the face of a god,
and the voice of Schoeney's daughters,

But doom goes with her in walking,
Let her go back to the ships,
back among Grecian voices'."
Expatriate American, speaking Greek
Perception, and Greek passion. How the past,
Once in a poem, has more lives than a cat!

SCENE 2

PRIAM: Come here, dear Helen, sit beside me. I do not blame you, as I have often told you, I do not blame you for this long cruel war. How can one be blamed for the beauty which is given by the divinities?

PRIAM: Come, my dear child, it is not your fault, but the fault of superior powers, who should know better.

PRIAM: Never mind that, beautiful Helen. Tell me, if you can, who is that noble man, so tall and strong, among the Greek soldiers? I never saw anyone look more like a king.

PRIAM: And who is that impressive-looking man, shorter than

Agamemnon, but with broader shoulders? He looks like a ram among a big flock of ewes.

HELEN: He is the cleverest of men, Ulysses, who looks like a farm boy until he begins to speak. Then everyone sees that he is by far the most cunning of minds. And there is Ajax, Father Priam, one of the most powerful Greeks, a truly great soldier, a stone wall among the men in battle. I see all the important captains but two. (*She leans forward, staring into the distance*) My two brothers, Castor, the tamer of horses and Pollux the skillful boxer. Either they did not come with the army or they are unwilling to fight because they are my brothers and would be mocked by the other men. Where are they? where are Castor and Pollux?

DRAMATIST: This moment is profound. For they are dead,
Them the growing fusing earth holds fast
In their dear native land,

their Lacedaemon:

This moment, as all ignorance, is sad,
Ultimate sadness, quintessential darkness!

(*At the other end of the Trojan Wall, the old men have been silently regarding the plain.*)

1ST OLD MAN: Now they are praying to God for victory.

2ND OLD MAN: Now they are swearing that the winner, Paris or Menelaus, will keep beautiful Helen—

1ST OLD MAN: If they are using the usual prayer, they are saying: 'Father Zeus, most glorious of beings, greatest of beings, who sees all things, and knows all things and hears all things and shows all things, witness our oath!'

DRAMATIST: This is the Zeus of whom a later author

Wrote wisely, as I think,

"Zeus, whoever He is, if this

Be a name acceptable,

By this name I will call him.

There is no one comparable. . . ."

For God has many names and also none,

And he is nameless, but he must be named!
Of the five hundred thousand words or more
Which are the English language, A to Z,
The most important one, *to me at least*,
Is God! and after that, Nature, Death, Hope,
Forgiveness, Love, Humility, New York,
America, Knowledge, and Poetry!

3RD OLD MAN: Now they are cutting the lambs' throats with the pitiless knife.

DRAMATIST: How popular sacrifice seems to be
At every period of history. . . .

4TH OLD MAN: Now they are saying once more that the war must end with this duel, the winner taking Helen—

DRAMATIST: They want to limit it and make it private,
But man exists by being-in-the-world,
Man is the beast who lives in cities; hence
He must exist by striking other men—

3RD OLD MAN: Paris and Menelaus are now donning their armor.
How intense and suspended the air is, just before the crucial moment!

DRAMATIST: The interest springs from the *contingency*.
No one, not even God perhaps, knew then
Just what would happen next,
the secret of games,

the heart of drama—

1ST OLD MAN: The rival armies are gazing as thrilled and enthralled as we are.

2ND OLD MAN: They are crying out words of encouragement to Menelaus. But there are no cheers for Paris.

1ST OLD MAN: No man likes him. He is a man too much a favorite among women.

2ND OLD MAN: They have started! They are sparring for an opening. . . . They come closer all the time. . . .

3RD OLD MAN: Paris has flung his spear at Menelaus!

4TH OLD MAN: It breaks against Menelaus' breastplate! Paris is done for!

OLD MAN: Menelaus is being careful, he is taking aim carefully, he is taking his time. . . . He has hurled his spear at Paris!

OLD MAN: It has broken through Paris' breastplate! But it has not killed him!

OLD MAN: Paris dodged slightly at the very last moment. He swerved aside. And the spear pierced the edge of his breastplate harmlessly!

OLD MAN: Zeus is unjust or Paris is indeed a favorite of his, to be so lucky. . . .

OLD MAN: But look! Menelaus has leaped forward like a tiger. He has seized Paris by the horsehair crest of his helmet! He is going to kill him! He is swinging him from side to side with insane anger.

OLD MAN: The strap has broken! Paris has escaped. I cannot see what is happening—

OLD MAN: A cloud of dust has fallen over Paris, hiding him!

OLD MAN: Some divinity has descended, no doubt, to protect the lucky and pretty boy—

OLD MAN: Look, Menelaus is stamping about, throwing up his hands to heaven, crying out at the cruelty and injustice of Zeus—I knew that this duel would come to nothing. . . .

OLD MAN: I am disappointed.

OLD MAN: I feel disappointed and let down. Life is always like this. Builds up to a crisis, then nothing happens, everything goes on as before. . . .

DRAMATIST: Is not Life like this always everywhere?

Builds up to a crisis, then a letdown,

And all goes on just as it did before,

Somewhat goes on just as it did before?

OLD MAN: This war will never end, it seems.

OLD MAN: Look, Menelaus is still stamping about, seeking the man who made him a cuckold. It must be admitted—may Zeus forgive me—that he does not seem to have been treated fairly and justly.

OLD MAN: There at the other side is Hector, seeking his

lucky wicked brother also. For we who are Trojans have been disgraced today, and Hector is not the man to take disgrace sitting down.

(CURTAIN)

DRAMATIST (*Appearing in front of the curtain*):

This is, as you would find out anyway,
No sudden accident, mere cloud of dust.
It is divinity itself which intervenes,
A well-known happening in ancient times,
And now perhaps! If the whole truth were known!
Venus has come to save the pretty boy,
But why? Do you know why? Some say
Because a long time since Venus, Juno,
And chaste Diana met the lucky boy
And asked him who seemed prettiest, to him:
He chose and some say that his choice was Venus
Because her buttocks were the prettiest!
O lucky boy! to have a choice like that!
O lucky boy! to see the bare buttocks
Of the great Queen of Love,

also Diana's!

And also Juno's! what a view of sofas!

PRODUCER (*Suddenly entering*):

I must admit the fight was most exciting,
But must you make these speeches all the time,
Distracting from the plot and boring us?
You sound as if this were a burlesque show!
Hardly a play in verse, far in advance
Of common fashion, part of the *avant-garde*—

DRAMATIST:

My speech is most important, relevant,
Significant; embellishes the whole
With the rich views of a self-conscious mind,
Superior in this, free and apart:

SCHWARTZ

This is the greatest virtue of all art,
That it possesses Life and yet transcends it—

PRODUCER:

O, there you go again, abstract and voluble—

DRAMATIST:

Let me point out, before once more begins

This ancient action, what the meaning is

Of what has just occurred. Beauty!

Beauty obsessive in the mind and heart

Like May in modern life,

turning all men

From work to thoughts of love,

even old men.

Even the impotent, even the helpless

Obsessed with Beauty, prepossessed by Love

Strong Love and war-like Beauty,

destroyer of cities,

destroyer of men!

(CURTAIN)

SCENE 3

Helen's bedroom. She has just returned from the Wall. Enter an old woman, whose face is averted from the audience.

OLD WOMAN: Come, Helen, Paris awaits you in the great bed, radiant and strong-limbed. You would not think he had just come from a fight. You would think, if you saw him, that he were about to go to a dance, or had just stopped dancing, flushed and glowing.

DRAMATIST: How excellent the metaphor! how moving!

How it suffuses the nature of the dance,

And shows its genesis in Love itself—

(Such *trouvailles* show what insight into Life!)

HELEN: I recognize you, Venus. I see the slim neck, ineffably round breasts, and sparkling eyes beneath your old woman's disguise.

(Venus is transformed, as Helen speaks, into a tall young woman, as Helen puts her hand to Venus' clothes and touches her breasts. Venus looks very much like Helen, or perhaps one should say, like an older sister.)

DRAMATIST:

Silence must rule the recognition scene.

The goddess says no word,

so radiant,

Articulate, explicit is her presence,

There is no need to speak. Her face is speech,

and also her white limbs—

HELEN: Strange queen, what do you want from me? I think maybe you will take me off to another foreign city, further from home always, as soon as some other pretty boy wins your affections. I know, you don't want me to go back with Menelaus, who has won me in a fair contest,—fair until you intervened with your cloud of dust! You want to stop me and keep me for the coward Paris. Why don't you go with him and sleep with him. *You* be his wife or his whore. But I will not get into his bed. It would be shameless to do that, after all that has happened. All would have even greater contempt for me, especially the women.

VENUS: Be careful, Helen: do not anger me. For if I desert you, what will you have? Nothing, nothing at all, for you are your beauty. I will hate you endlessly as now I love you inexhaustibly. Come with me then: it is vain to protest against the will of the divinity.

HELEN: I am helpless, I cannot resist you, no matter what rules in my heart. Let Paris at least come here, so that no one else in the palace will see what is happening.

VENUS: I will bring him here invisibly, dear child, dear sister, as I brought him from the battlefield.

(She turns and is transformed into an old woman again, as she goes out.)

HELEN: I wish I were dead. It is evil to be beautiful. Then one's heart and mind are helpless to prevent and avoid evil actions. How little I knew when a girl, how little I enjoyed my obvious happiness when I was Menelaus' lawful wife—

DRAMATIST: The pain of beauty is a double thing,
Present in beauty, omnipresent when
Beauty departs. Goodness is difficult,
And at its peak, almost unbearable—

(Helen's back has been turned to the audience while she has been looking into a full-length mirror, examining herself from various perspectives, with pained and delighted looks passing across her face. She turns again, and Paris, who has just entered, is before her.)

HELEN: Here you are again, you coward. I wish you had been killed by Menelaus, who is a strong and brave man.

PARIS: Don't blame me, Helen, don't taunt me.

HELEN: How often you have said you are the better man and could easily defeat Menelaus. Well then: go now, challenge him again, fight him face to face—No! don't challenge him, I don't want you to, because he will defeat you again, you will only disgrace me and yourself again, the goddess will have to save you again—

DRAMATIST: Does this not sound much like a modern scene
In modern authors such as Hemingway?

PARIS: Now, Helen, do not be a child about these things. Today Menelaus has won. Tomorrow I may win. For I have some divinities on my side also, and it is all a matter of luck, or divinity, or something which has very little to do with one's character or effort. You ought to know that, you who were given your beauty effortlessly, and spontaneously.

HELEN: You speak like a coward.

PARIS: I speak like a sensible intelligent man. Come and lie with me, for desire overpowers me.

DRAMATIST: There speaks the average sensual man,
Although with cunning and intensity—

HELEN: It is a shameful thing. But your words move me like an
obscene joke—

PARIS: Helen, I never loved you nor wanted you as now I love
you and want you. Never, not even when I took you from your
husband and serene Lacedaemon and sailed with you on the
sea from which Love herself first arose, when the motion of
the ship on the sea was a moving image, in a way, of my de-
sire, when for the first time I took you, amazed, astonished,
overwhelmed by your beauty, naked, and by my luck: not
even then did I desire you, as now I desire you—

HELEN: How shameful and disgraceful that I should be very
much moved by your words—

DRAMATIST: O what insight this moment holds, that now
Desire should be greatest,

now in the aftermath
Of worst defeat, immense humiliation:
I view this as a great illumination—

HELEN: Your words waken equal desire in me, which shows
that I am depraved too, I am of your kind. Yet, even if I
would, with strength of character, try to reject you, I could not.
For Venus compels me to open my body to you.

PARIS: Helen! most beautiful, most desirable of beings!

(CURTAIN)

*(Producer appears, shakes hands with Dramatist, obviously
pleased.)*

PRODUCER:

I must admit that was most interesting—
Say something now: profound, sublime,
Original—

DRAMATIST:

How would it do, in fact,
To speak of what occurs behind the curtains

In Helen's bed,
 Paris in Helen's arms:
 Would I be banned?

PRODUCER:

No, no, something sublime! (*Exit*)

DRAMATIST:

All right, you asked for it. O what a thought
 I have just had:
 if Jules Laforgue had lived
 At the same time as Ovid, if the two
 Had put their minds together on the scene
 Which just has passed! O what a comedy!
 —Meaningless to abstract them from their time,
 Hopeless to wish they rose from the dead and spoke,
 singing, a pair
 But lacking them, let me, fifth-best, go on:
 Here have we seen the average sensual man
 —One so much so he is a wonder at it,
 A monster of the averageness of men—
 Triumph in a woman's heart. Although he had
 The help of a divinity, he did quite well
 In attitude, persuading her to bed—
 Indeed, his very common argument
 Became a sensuality to her!
 —Thus when a boy I saw the ignorant man,
 The stupid one without imagination,
 Win out in my America, New York,
 Because of his stupidity, because
 He did not know or think of better things.
 Thus Paris, just because he is no hero
 Because he feels no qualms, is shameless,
 And is insensitive to fame, that last
 Neurosis of all noble minds, *does well*
 —Such is the way of the world, my dears,
 Passive and gazing, in the audience—

(The curtains still drawn, there is a loud outcry from behind them. The curtain goes up, Hector has entered the bedroom, sword drawn, and approached the bed which contains Paris and Helen. Helen cowers and tries to hide her nakedness. Paris has sprawled away from her and seized a nearby chair as his only shield against Hector's sword.)

HECTOR: You miserable and incredible coward! Who would believe that one of noble Priam's sons would sink to such depths of ignominy! I told you I would kill you if you ran away, and I knew you would run to Helen.

PARIS (*Clearly afraid*): Wait a minute, Hector, let me speak in my own defense before you kill me. The worst criminal has a right to say something.

HECTOR: How you cringe! What can you say, you shameless knave and thief? Your action howls for the only punishment possible to one who has brought so much misery and war—

PARIS: Just wait and let me speak, Hector. It is true that I cringe. I cringe because I love Life more than anything else—and you would too, if you were in my position.

HECTOR: My gorge rises as I look at you. Go on, say what you have to say.

PARIS: First of all, I did not run away. Venus took me away. Was that my fault? Blame the goddess, and not me for that! Second of all, she brought me here. It is pointless to become still more upset just because I am in Helen's bed. No one else knows that, and besides, what else was there to do? Waste time on idle tears and self-reproaches?

HECTOR: Everything you say condemns you out of your own mouth. You are a plague to this city, bringing this unbearable war, which it seems will never end.

PARIS: You're a fine one to use that against me, you who have based your whole life on war, on murdering other men.

HECTOR: Only in defense of one's honor, one's city and one's people: such is the warrior ideal. But who would expect you to know that?

PARIS: O, no, how would I know that this ideal, this city and this people all use war to maintain their own prosperity and glory, abusing all else all the time. For that is all your bravery is, a way to keep up the usurpations of this city on the whole countryside and the ships that pass this coast. *That is all it is.* But I don't expect you to understand that. For you yourself are the fool and the victim of it all. You are used by the real rulers of this city, risking your life that they may be safe, fat, powerful, and rich!

DRAMATIST: Who would deny his insight here, although
It does him little credit, makes one sick—

HECTOR (*Taken aback*): Whether what you say is true or not, you must die. The ideals of our city and our people must be preserved, whatever their origin. We must not be disgraced and laughed at by other peoples and above all by the Greeks—
(*Hector advances, powerfully and easily knocks down the chair with which Paris has been defending himself. All this while Helen has been weeping, but peering above the bedclothes to see and hear what is being said.*)

PARIS: All right, since I have no other choice, I must resort to my last but most powerful argument! Helen, forgive me, I love you as I love Life, but I love Life more. I must show Hector the first and second of my motives—

HELEN: No! No! do not shame me any more.

PARIS (*Seizing the bedclothes and uncovering Helen, while she hides her face, weeping*): Look at this woman's nakedness, Hector, and tell me you too would not do anything to have her and keep her—

DRAMATIST: This is the most sensuous sensational
And sensual argument I ever heard—

(*Hector looks at Helen in spite of himself and his arms fall to his side as he regards her weeping shaking body.*)

HECTOR: I am very much moved, in spite of myself.

PARIS: Look at that beauty and think of what that nakedness must be when it shakes not as now with sobs, but with love!

great energy. Tell me, is it not irresistible, Hector, if you are honest with me?

HECTOR: You are the most contemptible of men. I lack the heart to kill a jackal like you, so great is my contempt. But I must, in respect and honor of my people and myself, although it is a profanation of this sword. (*Hector advances toward Paris with his sword drawn again.*)

PARIS: I can't think of anything else to say, except to appeal to the goddess who has always helped me.
(*Just as Hector is about to pierce Paris, Venus appears again, radiant as before.*)

DRAMATIST: A *dea ex machina*, as before!

VENUS: This man is mine, Hector. *He shall not die.*
(*Hector recoils, as if utterly dismayed. Paris kneels at Venus' feet.*)

HECTOR (*As he departs, with his back turned*): Not too many powers have been arrayed against me, but too diverse and various a number, the divine with the human—

PARIS: Once more my heartfelt thanks, strange Queen! (*Venus fades out.*)

PARIS: Helen, forgive me. Do not weep. This is Life. This is the way Life is. Let us go back to where we were before.

HELEN (*Covering herself and cowering*): No! how can you, after all that has happened?

PARIS: If I had any sense of shame, I would have lost it in the midst of my fear. For I was sure that I was about to die. Come, Helen, whisper sweet hot obscene words to me. You never have except in sleep, after an excited night. Make me forget all that has happened.

HELEN: Endlessly shameless! How you bring out the worst in me.

PARIS: I adore the best in you, your beauty, Helen, most beautiful, most desirable of women—

(CURTAIN)

DRAMATIST:

We've come to what is but a specious end,
 A few words more are really necessary:
 The lust was most exciting, was it not?
 Compare this version with the one in Homer,
 It will be like comparing the full moon
 Seen by the lucky lover, with the moon
 Seen through a telescope or photograph
 —Looks like an adolescent's sometime face,
 And yet it has its use, it has its truth
 —A few more words are really necessary
 Though the actors are very tired and your gaze
 Bored and exhausted:

yet, is it not true,

Paris was charming, charming in his candor,
 Such frankness is so likable and fresh,
 Since so much else is dark, since human beings
 Are, present company of course excepted,
 So often mysteries at best,

and sometimes sneaks

But that was not the point. . . .

PRODUCER:

Get to the point,
 Then we can go home, end this long fiasco,
 They are dissatisfied enough, I know—

DRAMATIST:

All right, old boy, I will give them one more
 Thing to remember. Now, behind the curtain,
 Presumably Paris and Helen take
 Joy in each other's flesh. Suppose I looked—

PRODUCER:

Go on and look, we all know nothing's there,
 This is a show and nothing real at all—

DRAMATIST:

Touché! (He peers through the folds of the curtain).

SCHWARTZ

I see! He is on top of her,
They look as if they were wrestling,
it is a pain
And strain and most laborious,
breathing heavily—
O what a joy to look! Like that small boy
Who would not take the dollar offered him
By his big sister's suitor to go away
And leave them privacy to seek each other
On the sofa in the half-dark living room:
'O no!' he said, 'O no! I'd rather not,
I'd rather look!' He'd rather look, O boy,
Voyeur! voyeur! voyeur! all men are but
Voyeurs! you in the audience most of all
.... Enough of this: how boring in the end
Coitus is! here have we seen to-night
A grievous fight in which divinity
Hit heroism, as you saw, *below the belt*
Each time it had a chance, and won the day:
But virtue is, we know, its own reward,
Or as the poet said, Sweeney wins out,
—He understands the female temperament—
Samson and Agamemnon surely die
Because they make unhappy marriages—
And yet! for all of that, is it not true
That all of us would be the noble Hector
If but we could? Paris himself would rather
Be like the noble Hector, *if but he could!*
Is it not right that he should have sweet Helen,
Since Hector has his heroism?
Is it not right
And just that strong divinity
Should intervene so much in human life
And help poor Paris, help the human heart,
Otherwise so ignoble, mean, and starved?

SCHWARTZ

—He has a shallow view of God's strange ways
In Heaven and Earth, who thinks the just alone
Deserve His charity. He has a weak
Untrue idea of human life who says,
'What does this mean?' 'Does this apply to us?'
Hypocrite audience! I am not fooled, not I!
All of these things live in your consciousness,
And there the classic story will not die!

CURTAIN

THE DIVIDED BIRD

HUGH MACDIARMID

AH! Peirce¹ was right. His "minuter logic"
Could only avail towards what he sought
As the scrawl on an infant's slate
To a cartoon of Raphael.

The alethetropic barrenness of a Formal Logic,
The characteristic vice of mathematicians,
Of taking any hypothesis that seems amusing
And deducing its consequences, can do no more
Than pluck our bird and scatter its feathers.

Silly as the peacock's feather Lord Kames² declared
Not specified so would leave us at a loss to form
An accurate image of the fanciful feat
Described in *Henry V*³ to exemplify what
A poor and private displeasure can do against a king:
"You may as well go about to turn the sun to ice
With fanning in his face with a peacock's feather"
... "Plume yourself upon it as much as you like,
But what will that do to the king?"

Let us rather
Be with the bird as we are with the full-blown
Yellow rose of Space and Time whose petals we've counted
But will not pluck for our answer
Since it would work out "No!"

¹ Charles Sanders Peirce, the American philosopher.

² Lord Kames (1696-1782), Scottish judge and author, wrote "Elements of Criticism" (1762), and other legal, historical, philosophical and aesthetic works.

³ Act IV, Scene I. See discussion of this, and of Kames' contention, in Professor I. A. Richards' "The Philosophy of Rhetoric."

Tyun, tyun, tyun, tyun
Spi tui zqua
Tyo, tyo, tyo, tyo, tyo, tyo, tyo, tyo, tix;
Qutio, qutio, qutio, qutio,
Zquo, zquo, zquo, zquo,
Tzy, tzy, tzy, tzy, tzy, tzy, tzy, tzy, tzy,
*Quorrox tui zqua pipiquisi.**

Ah, song!—I think of the stupendous gulf between
 This bird's song (so-called) and Webern's *Das dunkle Reich*
 Carrying the notation of *Pierrot Lunaire* to furthest limits,
 And how it must be sung accurately, not recited,
 While substituting for the counterpoint of *Pierrot Lunaire*
 A roving, tenuous pianoforte accompaniment,
 And how I once heard Erika Storm
 Cope with its fantastic intervals
 As most of us might hope to do
 With those of the *Italienisches Liederbuch*,
 —And she followed *that* with the square massive phrases
 And intelligible design of H. E. Apostel's
Gross tragt der Berg des Himmels stürmische Brandung!

What speculative grammar, what pot-hooks of thought,
 What three and three-quarter millions of words,
 Like Sigwart's, are these in my mind as I look
 At one turn of the flight and think of the bird's
 Automatism of feathers altering their angles
 Closing and opening the airspaces between them
 As wind and weather require? The whole point
 Of my crusade against "German" tendencies
 Is carried . . . by a mind none the less out of joint!

A wing-beat ends ontological pragmatism;

* Song of the northern nightingale. The "tyō" is a long-drawn and plaintive note.

The Boole-Schröder algebra, too, ceases to serve
 Though its application to terms in intension
 As well as in extension I clearly observe:
 The conception of consistency between propositions
 And the mathematical conception may be harmonised
 In vain . . . In vain as many non-Aristotelean logics
 As there are non-Euclidean geometries devised.

I am like one who listens to a song
 That might enter his blood and being, heard
 In terms of the instrument it was written for,
 But here to another colour medium transferred
 . . . All the instrumentation of a modern mind . . .
 Where the original conception, it seems, was so unified,
 So infallibly realised in every detail,
 It loses more than it gains to my learning allied.

As in *Der Einsame* I first cast away
 All thought of the bird an inspiration to seize
 But immediately after I too make my form
 "Give" to the bird; and the difference of these
 Consecutive thoughts is that the lack of the bird
 . . . Though its source . . . from the first can no longer impair
 The mental music; but the justification and meaning
 Of the second require the bird visibly there.

The first has been the usual source of my art.
 Now the second—the departure from that—must be.
 —Craftsmanship not for its own sake now,
 But as blood, bones, nerves of an organic idea,
 Wolf not Schubert . . . the bird to my thought
 As the words to his songs; a method that cannot be taught
 Or learned; being too infinitely varied,
 Too organic to the conception. So the bird may be "caught."

I shall look no more at special poses then
 Like the work of some great Eastern artist.
 The methods perfectly opposed, the results the same
 (And yet I don't know—the bird *may* have wist
 And employ its power of striking effects
 As I remember a cock-bullfinch did,
 At mating-time frequenting the alder roots by a stream
 Where its gem-like colouring best with the drabness contrasted!'

O thou who every darkling storm that we obey
 Revealest, every sombre surge dost find,
 Turning our obscure night to sleepless day
 With celestial showing, wherefore, O mind,
 Findest thou inexpressible this natural sense
 Both of a structure and its internal rhythms, till
 This bird seems, like that Chinese idea of art,
 As valuable to me as alien to Western skill?

Am I left, as with my sense of the antinomy between
 The ideal of conscientious action and the actual
 Aberrancy of the Unglückselige Bewusstsein,
 To return from vain fancies to the baffling factual,
 Or, like a subjectivist, always forced at last
 To consequences paradoxical to common sense
 Where linked to an ultimate human impulse
 An idealist might establish coherence?

But what idealist can sing this song?
 Resolve my desperate imbroglio with this bird?
 Only that study of structure it seems will serve
 To which I have already glancingly referred.
 Else we have a mass of disconnected facts
 Which cannot be traced to a common source.
 Yet the bird is no more most itself
 In fleeting moments we seize than a man is, of course.

If all men were as passionately devoted
 To Science, Philosophy, and Art as I
 The vain thoughts that make some of these verses halt
 Would be impossible to any man. But you cry
 "Men can never be that but only a few."
 You are wrong. All men are ripe for the highest any man knows.
 That is a present fact, as the mind of any man stripped
 Of all its accretions and pushed back to its foundations shows.

For lack, alone, of the good will to live,
 Nay, for lack of love, Mankind is debarred
 From the individual economic independence
 Of every man, and all our science is marred
 And turned to misery, madness, and murder today
 Instead of abundant life. . . . I can get
 Far nearer to this bird simply by longing to fly
 To all men's ears and hearts with this message yet.

What prevents me from getting close to the bird is the same
 As what—mobile as my thoughts are—frustrates this song
 And as that which has destroyed the oneness of man
 In all men, defeating all science and breeding all wrong;
 For a poet—so must brother-men—lives by results,
 Not premises, acts of creation, not decrees,
 Postcepts, not precepts; and all true love,
 And a bird's flight and song, are made of these.

The movement to seek values is impulsive in character
 Like the flair of an artist who feels impelled
 To realise in his work the value of beauty
 He has discerned; only so the ideas we have held
 Of freedom and brotherly love can be realised,
 Not deliberately willed as a duty is willed,
 Not pursued as the result of a pure act of choice,
 . . . All our efforts are vain save with true love filled.

The normal outlets of the push of the impulse
 Towards all values are almost all shut today
 Just as I fail to express my sense of this bird,
 Just as I find it ever harder to slip away
 Into that clear and silent zone, where the intention
 That led me to enter it solidifies;
 Where the opposites command—light, shade; faith, unfaith . . .
 Giving the perspective in which song like a bird flies.

All else is spiritual death—the lie in the soul,
 Whence ethics usurps the throne of ontology,
 And science subverts philosophy's rights.
 . . . In the long history of humanity
 I can find none righteous; and the condition of the world,
 . . . With Plans everywhere; no healing in these! . . .
 The essentially hellish character of politics,
 Shows today the worst ravages of the foul disease.

We have been like the Chinese painter who
 Dare not paint the eyes in his dragons, lest they should fly away.
 I too am a slave in body with a soul that soars
 Worshipping the Heart of Man and the Unknown today,
 Dreaming again how to bring to mankind, divided
 And blinded by hate, the blue freedom of the birds
 And make them all one family under the sky.
 —I dream no longer. These are my words:

“How the swift flight shines and the shadows fall!
 I did not know the hidden stream in my mind could hold
 So much darkness as that—it has crowded in
 Shadow by soft shadow like sheep to a fold.
 So light and smooth is the flight of the bird
 Its pure elusive essence has entered into me
 Like the genius of Spain . . . that spirit unchanging, so close in its
 fibre,

No foreigner can enter . . . that can express itself once
and once only.

I am filled with shadows now as with snow
—The shadowy snow of the woes of all mankind;
Blinded with the laurels of lead that the wings
Of the years that are useless to them round me bind.
The shadows are borne into my inmost being
On the dark swift stream that is mightier far
Than that other stream confused with the lights
Of things as mere reason says that they are.

Why will you not come to me save darkly thus,
Bird of the Heavens? The solitude
Of its habitat makes no creature wild
Save men have pursued it. Have I pursued?
Birds' fears are all based on bitter experience.
Fear you men's reason? Then you have cause!
Who know your worth, and want and care for it,
You meet more than half-way. These are Nature's laws.

If a bird is a solitary it is never
Because it cares for solitude for solitude's sake.
That is true of the Joy and Peace men seek.
Let them search their hearts to find the mistake
That keeps these unfound and always will.
The bird thought most shy turns out to be
The most confiding at last; and love
Will bring the genius of "God" to humanity.

Into the innermost core of my life
Flock the quick shadows; and now I know
Wings are spread over the world today
Only conceived in the depths of darkness so.
From the stream of intuition rises a truth

That reason, since it lacks it, denies the name;
 More august than reason, more enduring, outsoaring it
 With Earth's loveliest song, and amplest pinions aflame.

And here in the shadows in my thalamus⁵ now
 The bird has disclosed all its secrets to me;
 I know the destiny of man, the call
 Of the Seraphim to the life that's to be
 That still, like the pure birdlines I now hold,
 Only in the darkest depths of intuition lies;
 In poverty and peace and selfless love
 . . . From these alone can humanity rise.

Tell me no more that proud ambition,
 Material means, the lusts of the eye,
 All we can see and feel and take apart,
 Are the stays of mankind, or the power to fly
 Of birds is born of their feathers and shape.
 I know that nothing like these in myself at all,
 No erudition or effort, will enable me to sing
 . . . Or men to make a better world withal.

The world in which nothing will evade us
 Having cause to mistrust the limitations of our love,
 We who, since Elijah, should no more halt
 Between two opinions than that bird above!
 The obscure sense of value does not discriminate
 The principle . . . Justice, sympathy, are of no avail;
 All divisions disappear before love alone
 . . . It means we have too little love if in aught we fail.

I am as one who is still pursuing

⁵ The poet here expresses his agreement with those brain physiologists who find intuition—as distinct from cortical understanding, which is what he calls “mere reason”—localised in the thalamus.

MAC DIARMID

The bird behind all I can think of it
And see and hear and feel . . . as one
Who faithfully quests the Holy Grail yet,
Priesthood within priesthood, mass behind mass,
Without sodality, or institution, or order,
Heard only in the heart's silence. . . . Now the bird stoops;
With its eyes filling mine, I tremble on the border.

With its eyes filling mine . . . O would I could go
To Everyman with the power of the Age of Plenty so!
The bird is in them all if they'll liberate it
From the cage of vain reason that holds it yet.
That is, reason better; for true reason knows
The abyss it rests on, and distinguishes with fairness
Between the pseudo-simplicity of perceptual acceptance
And the genuine simplicity of immediate awareness.

THE FACTORY

HELEN EUSTIS

WHEN he first took the job of night watchman at the vacant factory, Primus was diligent and eager to do well. His first task was to go the rounds accompanied by the former watchman and lock all the doors. His departing predecessor would lock none of them for him in spite of Primus' frequent difficulty in mastering the locks, because, he said, he did not wish to take the responsibility if any of them were found open. It took them nearly two hours to lock every door in the east wing, the west wing, the north wing, and the south wing, and to be sure all the cellar chutes were well bolted down. Then the former watchman took the keys from Primus, saying that he had instructions to turn them over to the foreman who would turn them over to the manager, and so on, so they might be put in some very safe place—or perhaps destroyed.

After the first round was done and the doors locked, the old watchman led Primus back to the handsome lobby of the factory. From behind a door he produced two ordinary bentwood chairs, hung his lantern over a bronze wall telephone, and placed the chairs under it. Then he took a newspaper from his pocket, and tipping his chair back against the wall, began to read; severely (the other thought) ignoring his companion.

Primus sat down on the remaining chair, undimmed by his snub. He was a greenhorn at this business and had brought no reading matter. He had foolishly imagined his duties would keep him constantly active; he soon discovered that the heaviest duty of all was waiting for time to pass. But now he sat rocking on the two back legs of his chair, elated because he had been out of work and now he had a job; because he had never before reversed his sleeping and waking, and the prospect of spending his conscious time in darkness excited him.

The building was modern; in the lobby where they sat, two great windows of curved glass let in the moon. Once they had been show windows for the products of the factory, now they greedily sucked up the moonlight into darkness, reflecting no glint of it from their incurving shape. The moonlight came in so brilliantly that Primus had the curious impression that it was really day after all, but that something had happened to his vision so that he could not see the true color of the sun. His elation turned to nervousness. The quiet was enormous. It grew and grew. He sat frozen, listening to it. It weeded forth like a huge unsightly plant, growing, growing, crushing its foliage into every cranny of the hall. At first it beat tenderly on his ears, then harder, louder. . . . At last, with a desperate effort, he put his hand in his pocket and drew out a package of cigarettes.

"Have one?" he said to his companion, shaking cigarettes out of the package with a trembling hand.

The former watchman put down his paper and looked at Primus steadily. Primus noticed for the first time that one of his eyes was grey, one brown. "No smoking on the premises," he said, "and it is absolutely forbidden to lose your nerve."

Primus was entirely taken aback by this. He looked at his mentor questioningly.

"Your position is more important than you realize," the former watchman said, and took up his paper again.

But now that the silence was broken, Primus wanted to go on and learn all he could. This was probably the last time he would be able to question anyone.

"No," he said, "don't read. Tell me some things about this place. What sort of factory was it? Why does it have to be watched so carefully when it's not running? Why were my instructions about locking and guarding so strict? Was it the same for you when the place was running?"

The other put down the paper again, unwillingly, but as if he felt a duty of instruction. He began to speak as if reciting from a handbook. "It is of the utmost importance to the community

that the contents of these buildings be kept secret from the public. It was decided that the factory was overefficient, so it was shut down. It must be constantly guarded. That's all I know, but I can tell you that your job is most important—more so than you can guess. If you are not meticulous in the performance of your duty you will suffer not only the loss of your job, but you will suffer with the rest, as a member of the community."

This *was* strange talk, Primus thought, and he stared at the other closely. "Why are they letting you go?" he asked, almost without meaning to.

The watchman breathed heavily and looked away. The moonlight illuminated the saggings of his profile. "I am tired," he said, and suddenly Primus had the intuition that the man was dying. "Come," said the watchman wearily, "we must make the rounds again."

They went around to all the doors once more, but more quickly, because they had no need of locking them this time. All the same, Primus' predecessor carefully shone the beam of his lantern around each rectangular doorframe. Primus followed heavily, thinking: There is nothing so empty as a place that has the habit of being filled with people.

In the center of the four wings, at the juncture of the cross, as it were, there was an empty court. In the center of it was a longish building with doors on the two sides. Primus' companion paused, indicating this building with the beam of his light.

"This is the most important of all," he said, nodding toward it.

"What is it?" Primus asked curiously.

"The toilets," he said, and walked on.

Primus felt almost frightened, for he thought the other must be mad surely. Yet he dared not be altogether afraid, for this was all the company he had. He followed on and sat silent in the lobby until just at dawn when they made their last round.

When they had finished, the watchman looked at his watch. They were standing in the lobby and he extinguished his lantern, for the daylight, though pale, was complete. "Ten minutes of

six," he said, "We must leave without delay."

"But the day watchman," Primus said; "don't we wait for him to come on duty?"

The watchman looked at him boringly with his unequal eyes. "Under no circumstances must you ever wait for the day watchman. You must leave punctually ten minutes before he comes. You must never arrive early. There must always be a lapse of time between the watches."

Primus shrugged his shoulders and said nothing. The whole business seemed crazier and crazier to him, but he had no intention of becoming intimately involved in it. He was hungry, and glad to walk back toward the town. His companion walked with him to the corner. He stopped and faced Primus without holding out his hand.

"Goodbye," he said grimly.

"Goodbye," said Primus. "Thanks. By the way, I don't even know your name."

"If you did, you would not call me by it," the other said, and turning, walked away.

Primus went home to his dingy little apartment. His mother was up and getting breakfast, standing over the stove in a dirty wrapper with curlpapers in her hair.

"Well," she said sourly, "a fine time to be getting home."

"My God," said Primus, "you were glad enough when I got the job."

"Hmp," she said. "Well, since you're here, sit down and eat your breakfast."

He felt strange, eating eggs and coffee and orange juice for what should have been his dinner. His mother must have realized it; she got a slice of cold meat out of the icebox and put it on a plate before him. While he was eating his father came in. He had a long winter union suit and a bathrobe. Primus particularly noted the way his underwear bagged at the knees and the way his garters hiked up over the stringy lumps of muscle on the backs of his legs. His father yawned and stretched.

"Well," he said, "a person would think the least you could do would be to get a job with decent Christian hours."

"My God," Primus said, "you don't seem to realize they're paying me. Cash. Money. Mazuma."

"Well," said his father, "for that chicken feed they could at least let you get a good night's sleep. Now I suppose you'll be laying around all day making work for your mother."

At this Primus rose and went to his room, which he shared with his sister. A curtain modestly divided them. She was still sleeping on her side of it. As he undressed he heard the springs of her bed creak as she turned over. "Shut up," she said, and began to snore.

Primus went to sleep and slept heavily until late the next afternoon.

The second night he arrived promptly at eight o'clock. He found the key to the lobby left in plain view in the middle of the flight of steps leading to the front door; it puzzled him that this building which was so closely guarded all day and all night should be left unprotected for ten minutes each morning and evening. He devoted some time to thinking of this problem, for it seemed to him that he had once heard it explained, and had forgotten the answer. At last he found that the only thing he could think of was that somebody had told him Heaven protected it during those two ten-minute intervals. Still more puzzled by this explanation, he took the key, went inside the lobby, got the lantern from underneath the telephone, and started on his rounds.

He started off on the east wing, following the example of his predecessor. Above him the bulk of the factory loomed huge and black. There was no moon and the big windows were washed in starshine, like gaunt, unshining eyes. He felt somewhat oppressed by the solitude, but when he returned to the lobby he shook off his heaviness of mind. By the light of his lantern he read three stories from the magazine he had remembered to bring, but when he looked at his watch only a half hour had passed. He went on reading and finished the whole magazine.

Still it was by no means time to begin the second round. He could hardly believe it, for the previous evening the time elapsing between the two rounds had seemed very brief. He thumbed back over the magazine, teetered on the back legs of his chair, but at last, against all his conscience, fell asleep.

He was awakened suddenly and sharply with the distinct impression that the telephone had rung. Without stopping to run through the facts he knew:—that it was an inside wire, probably disconnected, and that there could be no one within these buildings who would use it,—he sprang instantly to his feet and snatched the instrument to his ear. In eager terror he tried to still his breathing, and bent intention and attention on the ear fixed to the telephone. He heard an intense soundless ringing that vibrated in bursting waves like waves of light washing up behind closed eyelids. At last he whispered cautiously into the mouth piece, "Hello?" and again, "Hello?"

No answer. Cautiously, stilly, he replaced the phone on its hook. He looked at his watch; it was at last time for his second round. He took his lantern and set off, consciously, desperately, businesslike.

The next afternoon, after sleeping restlessly through the morning, he went to call on his girl, who lived in the next block. He called her his girl, but that was wishful thinking on his part; actually he knew very well what she took him for: one of those steady devoted callers that a girl can safely use and then insult if he demands reciprocation. Still he could not stay away from her: she was a beautiful delicate-featured Jewess; fat in a delicate way, with glass-deep blue eyes, and succulent, as if she would be better roasted. He found her sitting on the stoop knitting on a pink sweater, absorbed in counting stitches.

"Hello, Annie," he said.

"Hiya, darling," she returned, raising her eyes in feigned surprise. "How's the big shot?"

"Big shot?" he said, settling on the step below her.

"A vital link in the chain of offense," she said. "Don't tell me

you think anybody in the neighborhood doesn't know about it. Your mother's conducted a house-to-house tour telling every goy family in a range of ten blocks. We got thin walls, so I got the news too. Matter of fact, it was even in the papers."

Mingling with and overpowering Primus' shame for his mother was his curiosity and pride about his job being mentioned in the paper. "In the paper?" he said. "You're kidding."

He was too apparent in his eagerness and she sneered at him with her fat dimple. "I thought you'd be interested," she said. "I saved the piece for you." She delved into her knitting bag and produced a rumpled clipping. She read ridiculing:

"OFFENSE UNIT CLOSED FOR INDEFINITE PERIOD
Plant No. 569 Closed by Order of CPI

Plant No. 569, one of the key units of the offense program has been shut down by order of Charles Snood, chairman of the Council of Peace Industries. Chairman Snood declined comment on the closing of the unit, only remarking that the plant was being closed by reason of overefficiency. Day and night guards have been set to watch the vacant plant, so recently the scene of busy offense activities."

She folded the paper carefully and returned it to her bag, staring at Primus while she did so, as if waiting for him to betray that he wanted her to give it to him. He stared back at her, sullen and unrevealing.

"Why're they shutting the place up?" she said. "What've they got there that's so secret? What's it like in there?"

"I don't know," he said. "How should I know? I just work there. It's like any other factory, from all I see of it."

"But what's it *like*?" she said, and Primus saw she was really curious, not merely idle. He felt a sudden unwillingness to tell her anything. "It's just like any other factory, I tell you," he said stubbornly, and all at once he was consumed by a realization of

the sordid indissoluble bonds that held the two of them together and made any sally one made against the other undangerous. She could not lose him; he was bound to her by some stolid colorless love; nor did he stand in danger of losing her—he was to her an almost indispensable convenience by now. So he could withstand her curiosity and she could pry at his secrecy safely.

She leaned back against the railing with conscious seductiveness and trailed her fingernail across the back of his neck. "Tell me," she said, pursing her lips to play the begging child. "Tell me, tell me, tell me!"

Primus closed his eyes in weariness. "It's a factory," he said, and he thought he must go there soon to be on time. "It's built in four wings with a court in the middle. There's a lobby in one of the wings where I wait between my rounds. I don't see any more of the place than you could see by looking through a hole in the fence."

"What's in the middle of the court?" she said, with a thrusting quickness, as if she were asking something she already knew in order to test his information.

He wanted to turn to stare at her and his muscles tensed for the movement, then halted. "The toilets," he said.

She giggled. "Well, after *all*!" she said, as if he had overstepped a boundary. He was tired of her company. He rose.

"I have to go now," he said.

"Oh, all right," she said, gathered up her knitting, and went inside before he was down the steps.

Her sudden acquiescence to his departure roused curiosity in Primus. Was she meeting another man when he left? Actually there was no question about it: he knew she was; he knew she always went out with some man in the evening; he even knew some of the men's names. But tonight he wanted to torture himself with it for some reason, so he made it into a question, and turned it back and forth from yes to no, conjecturing as to the how, the who, and most artificially, the if. Suppose she was going out with someone of a shady character who was pressing her to

make inquiries of him about his work. Suppose he was a spy, this fellow, suppose she should cajole some vital information from Primus because of her relation with him, and because of it Primus should lose his job—no, even be thrown in jail—why, perhaps even executed summarily—who knew, in these times?

At this thought he reached the carefully fitted gate in the board fence around the factory, and letting himself through, he laughed grimly, neither wholly surprised nor wholly amused at the lengths to which his imaginings had drawn him. This was the kind of nightmarish conjecture Annie solicited; such thoughts were not new to him.

The key lay as before in plain view in the middle of the steps leading up to the lobby. It annoyed him, lying there. It was so unreasonable. An adult does not simply leave a thing lying in plain view for another adult to find; that is a child's trick. An adult puts a thing in a place—under a mat, or in a mailbox, or on a hook. The middle of the steps is not a place; it is—it is—an accident. Swinging the key on its loop of string, he started abstractedly on his rounds. He was deep in the contemplation of many small unapproachable thoughts so that at the end of the round he was astonished to think he could have completed the whole circuit, and tried to think back if he had left one of the wings out of his inspection. He doubted that he could have remembered any such omission had he made it; the wings were absolutely identical except for the differences in the way the moonlight struck them.

He took up his post under the telephone, and only then did he realize that he had brought nothing to amuse himself with. No newspaper, no magazine, and going through his pockets he found they were completely void of any of the ordinary small impediments; not even a handkerchief. He turned them inside out and found only dust and tobacco crumbs.

Very well, he thought stoically, if I can't amuse myself within myself I must be a poor specimen after all. He resolutely closed his eyes and listened to his thoughts. Very shortly he fell asleep. While he slept, he dreamed.

Primus dreamed that the lobby where he sat was full of people, all walking about and consulting each other very softly so as not to waken him. They did not know he could see them through his closed eyelids, and he sat observing them closely, waiting to determine the correct moment to throw off his pretense of slumber and confront them with himself. Most of them were men, dressed very neatly with somewhat archaic correctness in foreign-looking clothes, stiff collars, and spats. Some wore monocles, others carried notebooks in which they jotted; others carried spring reel tapemeasures with which they measured parts of the room, with so much dignity that they forbade one to find their tailorlike movements ridiculous. There were a few women, all of whom wore fur neckpieces and smoked cigarettes in holders; they seemed to serve as points of reference; the men, after having made notes or measured for a while, would come to them with their findings, and speak in low voices, as if conferring. But there was one principal figure which seemed to act as a directing force in this group; she moved busily back and forth, giving an order, glancing at a page of notes, taking a tapemeasure abruptly from one of the men and making the measurement herself. At regular intervals she would drop what she was doing, rapidly cross the floor to Primus, and, bending down, peer into his face. When she did this, he saw she was Annie.

All the time he was observing this swarming activity, he was considering how best to confront and trap them all. He had to lay his strategy very carefully, because he was so greatly outnumbered. He considered a number of plans which seemed to him poor, until at last he struck one that seemed to him fool-proof. Annie was their leader. Therefore, the next time she bent over him, he would seize her by the wrist and use her as a hostage.

Accordingly he continued to pretend he was asleep, carefully watching the peregrinations of Annie through the room so that he would be ready when the moment came. At last he saw her approaching him, and he pretended to twist a little in his sleep,

so as to draw her to look at him more closely. His ruse succeeded; she put her face down very close to his, staring at him fixedly. Then, as she watched, a look of severe surprise spread over her face. "You're awake!" she said to Primus, and started back. Then he clutched at her skirt to hold her, but the material tore in his hand; then he caught at the heel of her shoe, but her shoe came off in his hand. All this time the others were rapidly and with dignity filing out the doors, and the room was nearly empty when he managed to catch hold of her ankle. "*Now* I have you!" he shouted joyfully, when to his horror her whole leg came off in his hand, and looking over her shoulder at him in revengeful hurt rage, she hopped painfully out the door after the others.

Thus Primus awoke, still feeling Annie's ankle firm in his hand. Still not wholly awake, he clung to this solidity of the dream, and raised the hand that clutched it before his eyes. He saw that he held a rolled up newspaper. He was awake at once, and dumbfounded. Where had it come from? He had not brought it—had he not just turned all his pockets inside out before going to sleep? He felt certain it had not been on the floor by the chair when he sat down. He was innerly determined it was a token left from the dream, a proof that the dream was not altogether a dream. Even when he unfurled it and saw it was dated as of that day, he refused to accept the obvious explanation that the day watchman had left it. To him it was a reminder of Annie's unforgiving vengefulness.

It was time for his next round. His lantern had gone out; he did not try to light it until he was outside in the clear moonlight. When he attempted to do so, he found the battery burned out. He thought about distractedly for a possible cache of supplies, but he was quite sure there was no such thing; in any case, he could not fix his mind on the possibility for long, for his thoughts were so much on the dream that he could not even find it frightening that he must set off in the dark.

The night was windy, embattled with clouds. From time to time the moon would appear and seem to gaze out in wild dis-

traction like a weeping woman pushing back her hair. In these moments of brightness he could see the factory and the bare yards clearly, but when darkness returned it was useless for him to be tramping around, for he could hardly see where next to set his foot, much less discern anything that might be amiss. Still he marched on, gazing at doors and windows he could not see; stumbling on cellar hatches only to have the moon appear the next moment to laugh at him climbing to his feet.

The wind whipped noisily about his ears and at the edges of his coat as he followed around the outlines of the east and north wings, but as he came to the lee of the north wing and approached the west, it stopped abruptly, and he could not tell whether he was simply protected from it, or whether it had really stopped blowing. In any case, there was a sudden silence in which his ears rang. He shook his head as if to clear his hearing that way, for it seemed to him that he heard a sound that was not in his head. It was a dull hammering sound, like the pounding of many fists or the thud of muffled footsteps—or it might have been no more than the pounding of the blood in his veins. That was what he could not determine—was it real or imagined?—and the more he tried to still his breathing and his heart, the more it blasted and beat to obscure his listening. It seemed to him that the noise came from within the building one moment, but the next he was as sure it was within himself. At last he felt his way to a doorway and put his ear against the door. Immediately the pounding sound was greatly magnified, and immediately he could decide even less than ever whether or not the door had not echoed his own heavy sounds of living back to him. He began to run, stumbling in the darkness, trying he knew not whether to catch the sound at some concealed source, or to escape its incomprehensible continuity. He ran quickly along the path of his circuit, with the sound louder and heavier as he ran. Now he had decided there must be some kind of disturbance in the inner court; someone had got in; there was trouble there, and he ran as fast as the darkness would permit, though realizing what his

helplessness would be, once face to face with whatever was there.

The walls of the west wing seemed interminable as he rounded them, but at last he came to the small gateway at the angle of the west and south wings that led to the inner court. He stood in the opening a moment before going on, trembling with fear or excitement, for it seemed his conjecture was correct: the sound here was greatly magnified, so that it seemed a thousand prisoners were marching about that black-dark court. What could he do against so many? Nothing, nothing; yet he paused, planning to confront them, when all at once the moon broke through the clouds.

The court seemed poured solidly full of quicksilver. The windows facing on it gleamed unbearably white. Shadows shone with darkness. Not a soul, not a human being was there; nothing but himself and moonlight. The silence that filled the absence of noise was as loud as the noise itself. Then a movement caught Primus' eye; on the long building at the center of the court a rectangle of shadow was slowly filling in with light. As he watched it move he knew clearly that a door was closing in the lavatories. Very silently it swung, only revealing its movement by appearing in the moonlight, and completed its swing with a barely audible click. As if released from immobility by this slight sound, Primus rushed forward across the court, but at that moment the moon went under a cloud, and torrents of rain burst earthward.

Slowed by the surprise of drenching and darkness, still he pressed forward toward the closed door. He did not know whether he sought confrontation or shelter, or whether he really believed what he had seen, but he groped his way around the lavatory building, clinging close to the wall to catch the protection of the eaves, pressing, pushing, and lifting at every door and window until he came back to where he had begun. All were locked.

At this he fled free of the building, through the court and out around the south wing to the entrance of the lobby. He must at once get word to the authorities that something was wrong. But

once in the lobby and out of the hurrying rain, he realized he had no way of notifying anyone. Whom should he notify? He did not know. The only contact he had with his employers was his pay, which was mailed to him in cash in a plain envelope with no return address. The former watchman—no, he had refused his name. Primus was walking up and down, wringing out the edges of his soaked coat. Then he thought of the wall telephone, went to it at once, put it to his ear. Even as he did so he remembered it was an inside wire, there was no use. But as he held it a little sound began in the receiver; a little clumping sound like the march of distant feet that grew louder, heavier—he slammed the phone back on the hook. There was only one thing more he could think of: although it was forbidden he would wait for the day watchman. Perhaps *he* would know some way of help.

The rest of the night he stayed in the lobby, waiting and listening. He could hear no sound but the rain which thrashed on against the incurved windows until the dim tardy dawn set in, when it ceased, to give way to a heavy fog. He looked at his watch constantly; paced back and forth; sat down; got up; opened the newspaper; threw it aside. At last he looked at his watch and found it was time for his departure. He went outside, locked the door of the lobby and laid the key on the steps. Then, instead of setting off toward home, he took up his stand at the bottom of the steps to wait for the day watchman.

These were the forbidden ten minutes he was traversing now, the minutes that he and the day watchman must not transgress. He stood somewhat defiantly, yet fearfully too, in the opaque mist. Outside the fence he could hear no sound; but in here he could not be sure; his heart was pounding again . . . or was it steps . . . or was it his heart. . . . It grew louder; his head rang; he reeled with dizziness; feet were tramping . . . what feet? It was his heart. . . . How could a heart beat with such multiplicity? It was steps. . . . He turned abruptly to keep from falling, and at that moment the door of the lobby burst open; dimly, through the mist he saw an angry host come forth to bear down on him.

He tried to run; he could not; he fell and they trampled over him; his heart beat louder and louder until suddenly it burst, and in the following silence he heard Annie's voice saying accusingly: "Why, you're awake!"

STAGES ON DEATH'S WAY

DENIS DE ROUGEMONT

AT THE GARDEN'S GATE

THERE are a thousand chambers in the Palace, a thousand beds for dreaming, a thousand for suffering, there is but one Lover; you have strayed, he flees.

—"Truly, you were seeking one another at first, by dint of fleeing one another you shall exchange all!"

The better to run, she has cast off her veils, and her nakedness is uncovered, O foolish one! But he finds them, and in them attires himself: veils of night. She has passed close by, and seen him not. Yet it is Longing that urges them on, and love calling love through the empty chambers, in the chill resonance of the apartments of Power. He, seeing her pass, is offended, or is it Longing that blinds him? She is bare, her legs take flight.

—You who know the Lord of the palace, tell me whether he lives, whether he still reigns amid the solitudes?

For if not, do you hear me, *I am the Prince!* And who is the strayed woman who will not love the Prince of these precincts?

But someone is calling me, listen, is it a voice from the garden?—

Are you indeed certain it was a voice?

There they hastened. The night rained within the thick forests, and the wild bramble whipped their bare legs. At the end of the garden, by the crumbling gate, where the walls hide only the desolate outskirts of the city, they have seen one another. Day is born amid the rain. The Palace vanished, the gardens laid waste, he is attired in the veils, she shudders bare.

—Where now shall I hide? she says.

—In your veils.

—You have taken them.

—Come into my arms, daughter.

THE MARKET OF DAWN

—CHOOSE the gem of your desires, said the little merchant with the beard of an oriental priest.

The man chose the dullest, he was sad and presumptuous.

In the measure he was persuaded, with the years, that his gem was good, being indeed that of his desires, the gem took on sparkle; and the more so, the more he loved it, the more he struggled against life, the more he lived. One evening, astonished to behold it again, he said:—I am a happy man, I have known how to choose the gem of my desires, for I alone divined the precious secret of its sparkle. And now, my gem, shine of your own sparkle! That I may at least once behold you while at rest.

It flickered out. He cast it into the fire and cinders. During the night—great was his sorrow—the gem began to shine beneath the cinders, and the bright gleam lighted the whole room.

He said to his gem:—O my gem, shine in the fire! I cannot touch thee, but the warmth is good.

All one winter he lived by this fire. Spring came.

—Shall I need fire any longer? I shall recover my gem and rest in the coolness of its sparkle.

He took it out. It was burned.

—Winter has had its time, he thought, in my life.

For the second time he went to the market of dawn.

—Choose the gem of your desires, said the man with the beard of an oriental priest, I remember your youth.

He chose the most sparkling. And behold: when he was happy it shone with a cold splendor, and when he was sad, it was comforting. But it was the other that he would take in his hands the

the gem of the sad and presumptuous desire of his youth. And he would weep.

A third time, he arose to go to the market of dawn.

—You have nothing left, said the little old man, and I shall sell you nothing on credit. You possess your Good, and you also possess your Life. Do you wish something more? Then here: one of the two gems will be the gem of your Death, if you choose it alone, and would suffer no more.

THE PISTOL-SHOT

CLEARLY I ought not to have entered. It was one of those blunders, made through carelessness, so one believes. Briefly, I entered only to see whether by chance she might be there. You know how complicated that building is. Corridors and staircases everywhere, a labyrinth. I kept following the red carpets and the red lamps, just as one chooses a color in a card game, red or black. I arrived at the reading-room. There were only blank sheets of paper on the tables, and everyone was reading. I said:—Is she here? Has anyone seen her?

They glanced at me with an air of annoyance. A footman rapidly approached and told me in a low voice:—*Because* Monsieur has come, and *because* Monsieur inquires whether she is here, she evidently is. But I would remind Monsieur of the rule of the club: *Neither Questions Nor Answers*.

I no longer knew what to say, for I had the one thing to say. Besides, even if I had only said: *Fine day today*, that would have been a kind of question or answer. I thought the best thing would be to leave without ado. But you know those corridors! And I didn't wish to be turned out. Naturally, I ought to have shoved the first door I came to, without thinking about it, and I should have gone out as I had come in. But the fact is, I was thinking how to leave, and by the right door. There was the mistake. The inevitable occurred after a few hours. I was exhausted, I was

hungry and thirsty, I met no one any more. I am an inveterate smoker. My last cigarette was burned. I said to myself:—Since this is absurd, why spare anything at all?

There was *the* question par excellence! The summary of all my errors, if you like. I found the manager's office. I burst in like a madman and I cried:—*Why?*

The manager was seated facing the door and looked at me as though he had heard nothing. We stared at one another for a time: I did not find his gaze, it seemed to me that this gaze leapt abroad from his eyes and overtook me from behind, I cannot explain it otherwise. In some way, it was my own gaze, which travelled across his eyes and returned at the nape of my neck. The instant I understood this, he fired.

—Yes, I am here, she said. (I grasped her hand. I felt she had fever.) I am here quite simply because you have come.

We were lying at home. I do not know how long it is going to last. She is delirious and I have that bullet in my heart.

And that is how it stands now: *I can no longer* ask any questions.

For if you tell me it is a true bullet that I have in my heart, it is evident that I am dead. And if you tell me that the bullet is no more real than what happened in the house, you at the same time cut off all possible questions and therefore all possibility of answer to anything whatever. Then let me be. It is my bidding. And if you do not believe me, *I shall fire!*

[TRANSLATED BY EDWARD M. MAISEL]

THE RULES OF PLAY

DENIS DE ROUGEMONT

EXPLANATORY NOTE. Everything is coming undone around us with a giddy logic that is almost admirable. Everything must be rebuilt. But where to begin? One would have to rediscover a *principle* of order and at the same time indicate its implications in every domain. A whole lifetime would not suffice. A very thick book could at best define the summary of work to be accomplished by several cooperating teams. I can here give only the chapter-headings for such a work. Not so much for the purpose of taking a kind of copyright on certain ideas or connections of ideas, as for the purpose of inciting others to elaborate them, each in his own way and in his own specialty. There is room for all in this work. I look upon these notes as a legacy; not the legacy of my epoch, which has scarcely even debts to bequeath, but a legacy of work to come.

ON CHEATING. The world-in-crisis of the twentieth century might be termed a world of *cheating*: treaties are referred to as scraps of paper, the League of Nations and the Hague conventions are scorned, war becomes "total," or undeclared, might makes right. But our world tends also to become a world of *unpunished* cheating, or what is more, a world where cheating is no longer felt as such. For our crisis follows upon several centuries of destructive criticism of the very concept of rule. Since the eighteenth century, it is *intelligence itself* which has led the struggle against conventions, hallowed norms, and orthodoxies, regarded as anachronistic, or artificial, or tyrannical, or superfluous—hence finally as non-compulsive. Whether rightly or wrongly, the fact is that the struggle against conventions has become confused, since the French Revolution, with the ideas of progress, liberty, social emancipation, revolution, reason.

Today we are witnessing an epidemic of cheating that shakes the foundations of democracy, and that is already provoking a

brutal reaction: the establishment of "totalitarian" rules and orthodoxies of a very low order. These pseudo-orthodoxies seem to confirm the rationalist notion of orthodoxy: a sterilizing tyranny.

It would seem high time, therefore, to re-examine the concept of rule itself. For what reasons, erroneous or legitimate, has it become discredited? How explain the fact that systematic scepticism regarding the accepted norms and orthodoxies has in all domains become synonymous with progress? What have been the results of the purely negative criticism of canons and rhetoric in the arts? In religion? And if these results are in certain respects disastrous, on what bases might one envisage a reconstruction which would be neither a return to the past nor a totalitarian reaction?

CAUSES OF THE DECLINE OF RULES. The most apparent and normal are the deterioration of rites, the abuses of power by the upholders of political or religious orthodoxy. As consciousness expands, the rules are ordinarily felt to be too narrow. The necessity for reform, or for change of orthodoxy (revolution) becomes clear. The new order makes its appearance as "cheating," till it is solidly established. But from the time of the French Revolution and Romanticism, we see a new phenomenon: for the sacred indisputable conventions are substituted laws, rational and contractual conventions which may seem *arbitrary*. Indeed, the critical effort of reason can unsettle their foundations, even as it has raised them. Lost is the sense of the fatality, or the profound and organic necessity, of certain conventions. Freedom consists thenceforth in denying the laws, no longer in utilizing them, nor even evading them. Individualism becomes a widespread and recognized cheating. So are destroyed the criteria and the common measures which gave a meaning to life. There is no way of knowing who wins or who loses when there is no longer respect for the rules of play. Where are they to be found again?

PLAY. It is in play (match, chess-game) that one may study rule in the pure state. Characteristics of play (according to J. Huiz-

inga*): it has a beginning and an end, which isolate it from "serious life," the domain of indefinite consequences. It is strictly delimited (court, arena, ring, table, etc.). Its rules are by definition inviolable, for what happens in a game has meaning only by virtue of the rules. Here conventions and reality are not opposed. Rule and freedom are strictly correlative. Surprises, inspirations and inventions are defined and made possible by rule alone. Partners understand one another and communicate perfectly, having an exactly defined language at their disposal.

Now the descriptions of the *sacred* among primitives given by recent sociologists and ethnologists correspond in every particular to this description of play. The chief known games, moreover, have their origin in sacred rites.

Furthermore, C. G. Jung has shown that the collective unconscious communicates with consciousness by means of a system of symbols, constant forms, archetypes, which are found everywhere and in all epochs, in dreams, rites—and consequently in the patterns of play.

The psychology of the player compared to that of the dreamer. (Would not play be for the awake man what dreaming is for the man asleep? A function-limit.) Rites, constant symbols, forms of play, rhetorics, liturgies, festivals, are the normal means of expression for the collective unconscious, the controlled channels which bring it into consciousness, the flood-gates or *custom-houses* of consciousness.

To be oblivious of them, to do away with them, to consider them arbitrary, is to deprive consciousness of its normal communications with the unconscious. The latter will ultimately smash through the dikes of reason: eruptions and inundations, neurosis, uprising of the masses. The masses compared to the unconscious of society, too long repressed. Hitlerism as a social neurosis. It follows from these comparisons that nothing is less "arbitrary" than the conventions and rules of play, whether they be social, artistic, religious. It is vital to seek again in all these

* J. Huizinga, *In the shadow of tomorrow* and *Homo ludens*.

domains the *regular and organic data* on which the rules must be and can be founded.

PLAY IN ART: RHETORIC. Parallel evolution of the arts: direct expression of the sacred—picturesque or mnemotechnic language of the community—progressive secularization: art becomes decorative, emotive, psychological—rejection of rhetorical canons: individualistic art—cult of eccentricity—finally incommunicable art (twentieth century) and “rhetorical” reactions: cubism, pure music, pure poetry. These reactions fail, for a rhetoric cannot be an individual creation. It presupposes a social framework. Where is it to be found again?

PLAY IN SOCIETY: THE SACRED. Primitive communities bound together by the sacred. Then birth of reason and the individual: it first appears as Greek *thiasoi*, profanation and “cheating.” Formation of contractual societies. Decline of respect for laws. Modern societies without orthodoxy: untenable paradox. Elements of play and the sacred which subsist: sports, fashions, new superstitions, slogans. Societies too vast and formless to be regulated. The only *measure* which subsists is money: symbol of abstraction and the arbitrary. Social nihilism. The cry of individuals, isolated and lacking coordinates, for any “religion” that will reunite them and implant them within protective structures. No society possible without “religion” in the Durkheim-Lévy-Bruhl sense.

PLAY IN RELIGION: LITURGY. In religions, liturgy is the realm of play, the sacred, rhetoric. It is opposed in some way to free inspiration. Religion vs. Faith, sacerdotalism vs. prophetism. But here the last boundary of play becomes visible: in Christianity, for example, the pious man may and sometimes must oppose orthodoxy in the name of the transcendent end which it serves: this is the positive principle of freedom. He can appeal without cheating. True *order*, then, is established by the constantly renewed subordination of play to absolute, serious ends.

ORTHODOXIES. “Open” orthodoxies: those whose function it is to

canalize unconscious and affective inspirations (rite, liturgy), then to regulate conscious social relations (law, morality), finally to orient them towards a common and transcendent goal, regarded as the Absolute, to which everyone may appeal against abuses of power.

"Closed" orthodoxies: those whose principle is immanent in class, race, nation, past, unduly absolutized.

The problem is to safeguard at the same time an orthodoxy (without which neither religion, nor therefore society, nor therefore art, is viable) and a principle of freedom, that is, of *recourse* to the transcendent goal, without which orthodoxies close up and soon degenerate.

THE FEDERALIST SOLUTION. Play, art, society, religion, are indiscernibly implicated and conditioned by one another. We shall only be able to restore them simultaneously. On the political plane, however, the urgency appears greater. Gigantism as mechanical cause of our wars. The only conceivable solution, then, is doing away with societies too vast to be regulated in an organic manner (the State-Nation-Autarchies). How to do away with them? Restore cellular entities, local radiative centers, and progressively, empirically, confederate them in multiple networks.

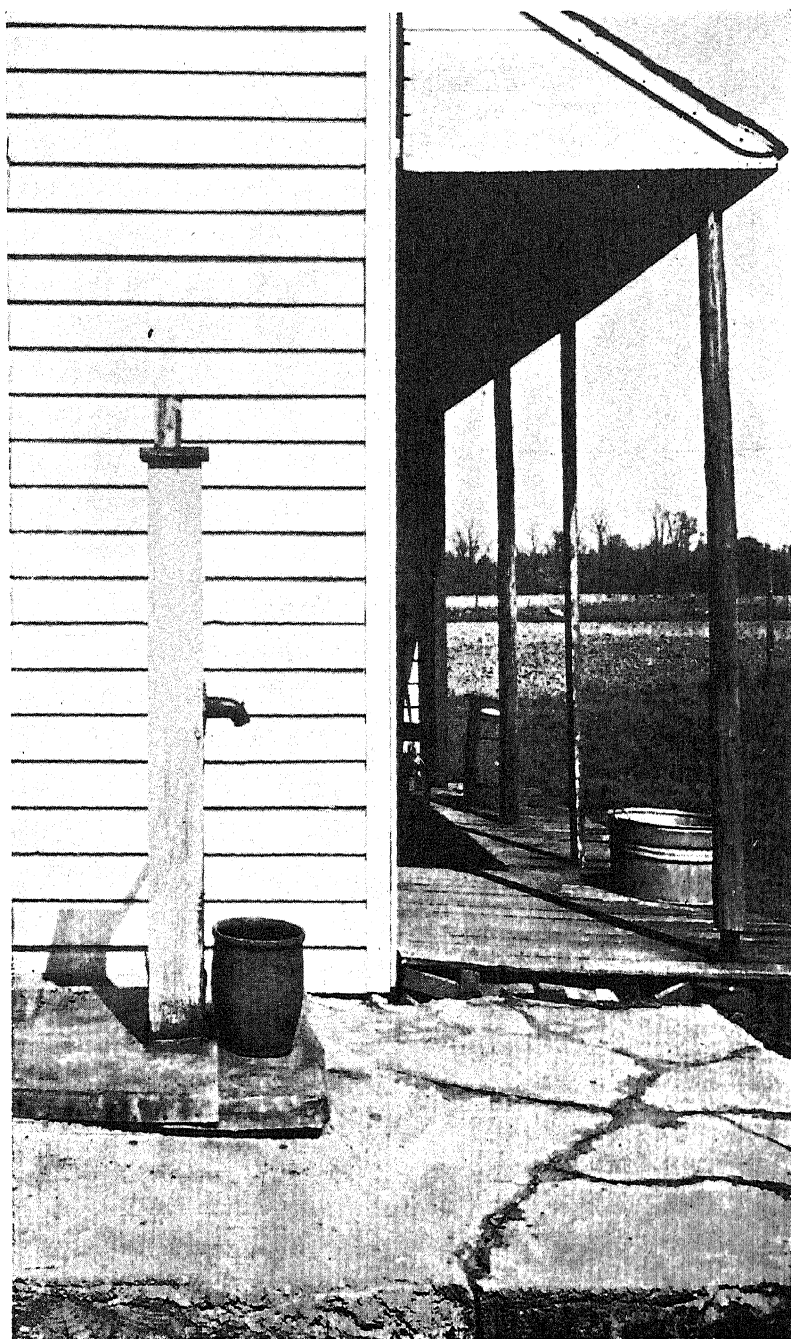
Federalism admits and supposes a plurality of communities. Each may keep its orthodoxy, on condition that the latter remains open. Federalist freedom is also defined by the possibility of belonging to several communities or changing from one to another. Within circumscribed communities solid structural organization is possible. Criteria are known. Words retain their meaning. One's neighbor becomes a concrete question, love and hate cease to be myths, results of propaganda, or subjects of polls. Problems are man's size, or to the dimensions of play. "Masses" cannot play, teams are required. Federalism is a system of teams, united by an identical undiscussed respect for the rules of play, whatever they may be, within the limits of each group.

[TRANSLATED BY EDWARD M. MAISEL]

LANDSCAPE WITH
FIGURES

BY

WRIGHT MORRIS



THEODORE R. SHULTS

AND he sent the night as sandman to the sun and
great sky sea for sailin off to Nod and cradle
moon to hold the baby stars and peep hole nights
to dream behind the sea and—

More—? he said.

And he made Center City and the candy case
at Eoff's and the crawl holes under porches and
the wrinkle crust on pies and—

More—?

And tar all oozy-goozy and the gummy-gum
on trees and drawers of thing-ma-doodles and
garter snakes and girls and—

Me too? he said.

Yes, she said—and kissed his eyes.

ANNA

SHE piled the plates and passed the toothpick box. The men leaned back and scratched their matches under their chairs. They looked through the window and saw the fence and the sky.

That was good pie, said Bane

That was right good pie, said Dill.

Fruit now aint fit for pies, she said.

They watched her pour water in the dish pan, stir up a suds. The cats came in from the cob pile and mewed at the screen.

I like smokin plug, said Shults

I like smokin plug too, said Dill.

They all looked at Dill and watched him rub up some. Then they looked beyond at the cobs and the brown sacked corn. They turned to watch her open the screen and empty the pan. The cats sniffed at the spot from the edges, the chickens went in.

You men stayin in the kitchen, she said.

We aint dressed for callin, said Bane.

They watched her dry her hands and take the lamp from above the sink. She moved through the door and they heard her sag in the chair.

That was right good pie, said Bane.

It sure was, said Dill.

AUNT CLARA

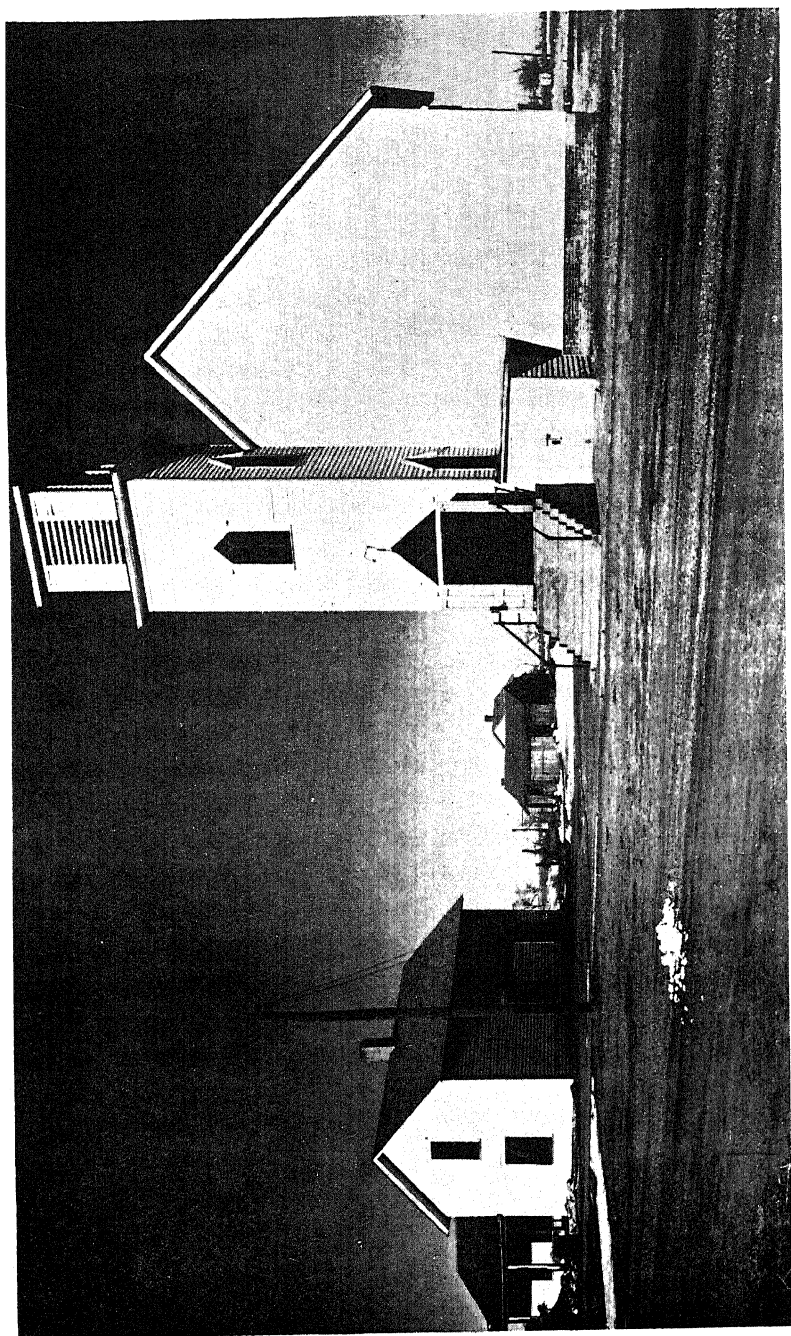
SHE came in with the eggs. She held them like clothes pins in her apron and scratched the spots. Uncle Harry came in with the milk. He took Capper's Weekly and the lamp into the parlor. He took off his shoes and filled his pipe with Prince Albert. Aunt Clara came and sat in the rocker. She pulled up her skirts till her ankles showed and the lumps in her stockings. Uncle Harry turned up the wick and Aunt Clara pulled him a hair and Uncle Harry stretched it over the chimney. It didn't singe so Uncle Harry gave it back. Aunt Clara rocked and looked at it. It was gray and she wound it round and around her finger. Aunt Clara didn't often read. Uncle Harry din't seem to mind. Aunt Clara sat and wound her hair and looked up on the wall at her mother—everyone said how much she was just like Aunt Clara. Everyone knew she had milked and sewed even when she had cancer.

GRANDPA

I REMEMBER him leavin his oatmeal with the sugar meltin on it and walkin out to where the privvy stood. And he stopped there lookin at the hill. Then he come in and sit messin with his spoon. Then he said, Ma I'm goin to build it on the hill. And she looked up at him then she looked away. And he got up and left us sittin there. Through the window we seen him turn and look off at the hill like the barn was built an settin on the sky. He's a damned old fool, I said, he's a damned old fool showin off for you—that wind, I said, that wind'll blow it clean to hell. But I guess what was growin on him had been growin on her. She just sat and looked at him like a litter of new pups.

GRANDMA

SHE took the change from the glass sugar bowl and gave it to him. She held his vest while he put it on and she buttoned it up. There was a stripe in the vest she said, and he looked good in a stripe. There was a stripe in the pants too but not so much anymore. There was none of it left where he sat or where he bent at the knees. She made him blow at her like at a match and she backed away. She dipped a toothpick in winter-green oil and made him chew the end. There was a stripe in his coat except where it bent at the sleeve. There was a chain with a gold toothpick in a case like a sword. She took the change from where he had it and put it where it belonged.



“PEE-WEE” SHULTS

HE sat so his Fauntleroy wouldn't bend and Reverend Whitford had a nice soft voice and Grandpa let him hold his thumb. And he must have fallen asleep for when he woke he said "what" and Grandpa said "the book" and he remembered. And a woman let him by and he walked down the slopey aisle to the wooden fence right in front of everybody and he followed it around to the little ladder stairs and Reverend Whitford reached and took his hand. And just like before it was bigger from here—the up and out of it was bigger and the people's heads were bigger and the aisle was like a crawl hole toward the sun. And like before he looked through it at the daystars on the hitch bar and then on past at the new wheels on a buggy and sittin there thumbin his nose was Dean Cole. And Reverend Whitford gave him the book and shook his hand.

DEAN COLE

DONALDSON's hitch bar would have to go. The split elm and the horse trough with marbles, the old rope swing. Mr. Jenks said the horses would soon go too. Cement will wear their hooves right to the bone he said. Dean Cole said for what did horses have shoes? Mr. Jenks spit and watched Dean Cole pump the swing. Mr. Jenks said some day cement would go out of town. He said when Dean Cole had kids he'd bet their kids would ride it for miles. And when their kids had kids they'd maybe ride it to Omaha. Dean Cole got out of the swing and felt for the marbles. Dear Cole said he didn't think he'd have kids.

GERALD COLE

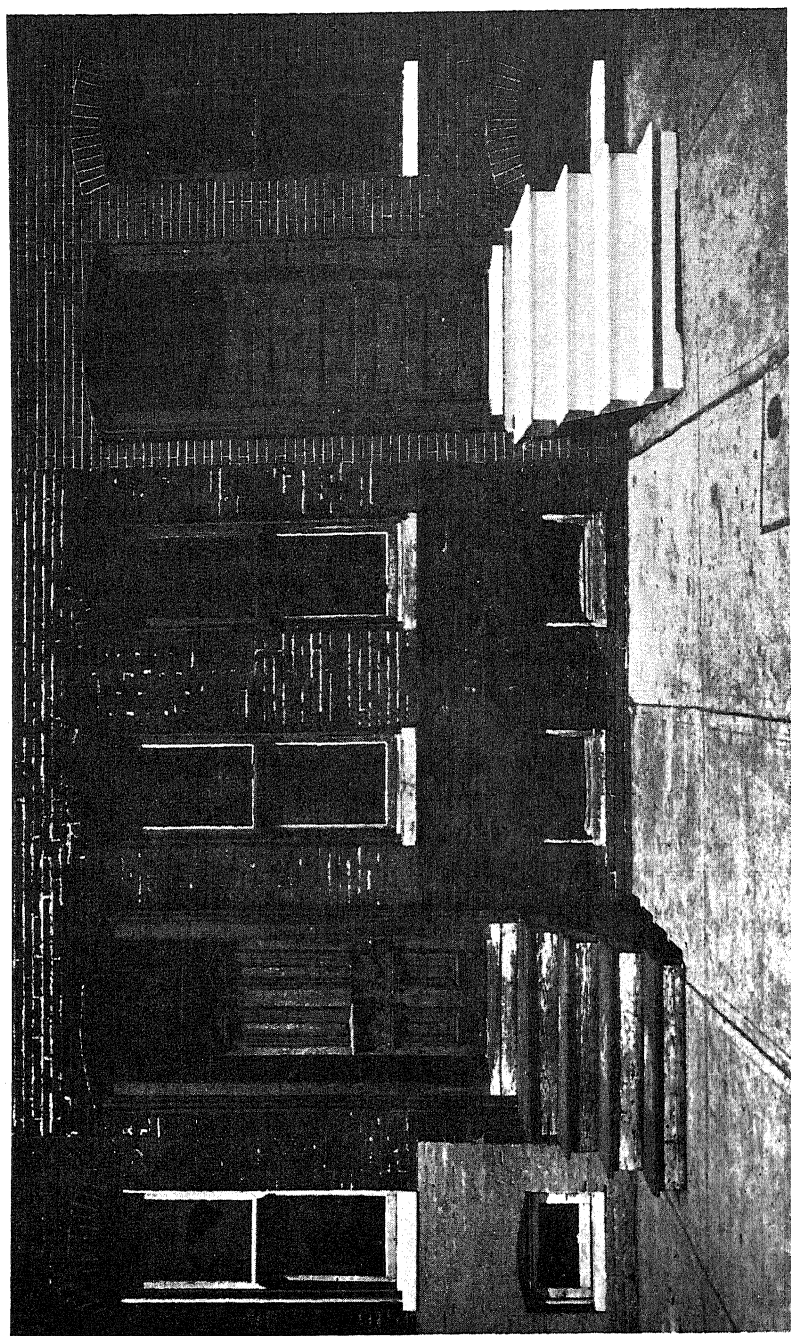
ACROSS the road was short grass and a meadow.
Behind the meadow was long grass and a tree.
Where the sawdust was the Circus came and
where the grass was thin the Carnival came.
Where the lanes were worn and yellow came the
Chautauqua. Beyond that were the buckboard
seats in the weeds. After the Circus, Carnival
and Chautauqua came the weeds. After the
noise was gone and the lights out came the girls.
The big boys and the girls. Last birthday Grand-
ma had said what a big boy. MY—what a big
boy she had said.

MRS. RIDDLEMOSHER

MRS. RIDDLEMOSHER was picking currants. Through the vines was Eoff's grocery store and a brown dog drinking at the fountain. Jewel's Tea Wagon came across the square. Near the tracks Mr. Pratt rang his bell. Mrs. Riddlemosher sighed and put down her pan and Mrs. Root came out with her broom. Mrs. Dubbs came out and called Mrs. Pine. Mrs. Jones held her skirts up from the sweet peas and helped Mrs. Lane cross the ditch walk. The dust came along and went by. Mrs. Riddlemosher laughed out loud about something and Mr. Pratt laughed and then they all did. Mrs. Root stopped shaking her broom. Mr. Riddlemosher came outside and coughed. Mr. Pratt laughed and then Mrs. Dubbs and then everyone but Mrs. Riddlemosher. Mr. Riddlemosher just stood and coughed.

MRS. EOFF

Mrs. EOFF sat and rocked where she could see. Her goat, Bertha, stood in the shade. Her back was sticky with mulberries and flies. Mrs. Eoff had a sheet on the grass to catch mulberries but they all fell on Bertha's side. A pigeon dropped from the belfry to the barn. He followed the rain pipe to the hen house, walked inside. Sparrows dropped from the trees to the wires and then from the wires to the eaves. Mrs. Eoff's goat Bertha whinnied very loud. Mrs. Eoff put down her sewing and looked at her. She came down and felt Bertha's udders, wiped the hair from her eyes. She took a switch and beat the grass for snakes, put water in her pan. Across the tracks behind the feed store Mr. Jenks mare whinnied. More sparrows dropped from the wires, stirred the grass near the road. Bertha whinnied very loud and so did Mr. Jenks mare. Mrs. Eoff tipped her sunbonnet back and looked toward the square. Little puffs of dust were marching down the road with the rain.



TED SHULTS

ALL the same.

The streets, the stores, the faces, the people; the swell was sweller, the dirt was dirtier—all the same. An all over more something added and that was all. More people, more big, more noise, more big, more everything—more less at home. More the less alone it seemed the more he was. More people to know than he'd ever dreamed, more people seen than he'd ever know, more left unsaid. All people in windows, not people you come to know. A girl in a window showin a ring or holding a bottle and tappin the glass, or stripped down some showin even more. Or a man with a corset to melt your pouch or if you hadn't a pouch it would widen your shoulders, lengthen your life. Nobody thought of talking to her or seein more than the pouch on him, or wondering if whoever they were they were alive. They were the pouch, the ring, the look, or whatever they did. Not somebody to know or like but something to buy. Something to have if you first just had the dough.

DOMIANO

It began to rain. Pigeons left the mound of manure. In the sidewalk were bright pieces of sand, dust puffed on the parked cars. Behind the noise rain tapped on a sign, steam smoked on the rails. Windshields streaked with the passing sky. Then behind the noise quiet—the rain had stopped. The sun sweat through and faded the rails, the walk. The sparrows came, then the pigeons, a black and white cat. From the door Caracci's woman flipped a butt toward the curb. Domiano and Scire saw it—Domiano was first.

Look—said Scire, he's kissin Caracci's bag!

Domiano made a sign with his hands.

STELLA

WHEN she knew they were in love she played him records. They like the same thing but in different parts. What he liked she thought was plain and what she liked he thought was messy—but like she said they licked the record clean. Warm nights they'd sit where they could see the sky. She knew the stars and let on to be teaching an he would sit an let on to be learning, looking at the ones he saw in her eyes. Watching the street lamp fringe her hair, let it tickle his nose. She liked to think he'd done everything that was worthwhile. She liked to think he'd kissed other girls before her. He hadn't but if she liked to think so he didn't mind. But she knew there was nothing in kissing too much. She knew all that but she liked to leave it to him. So sometimes she did and sometimes she changed his mind.

LAMONICA

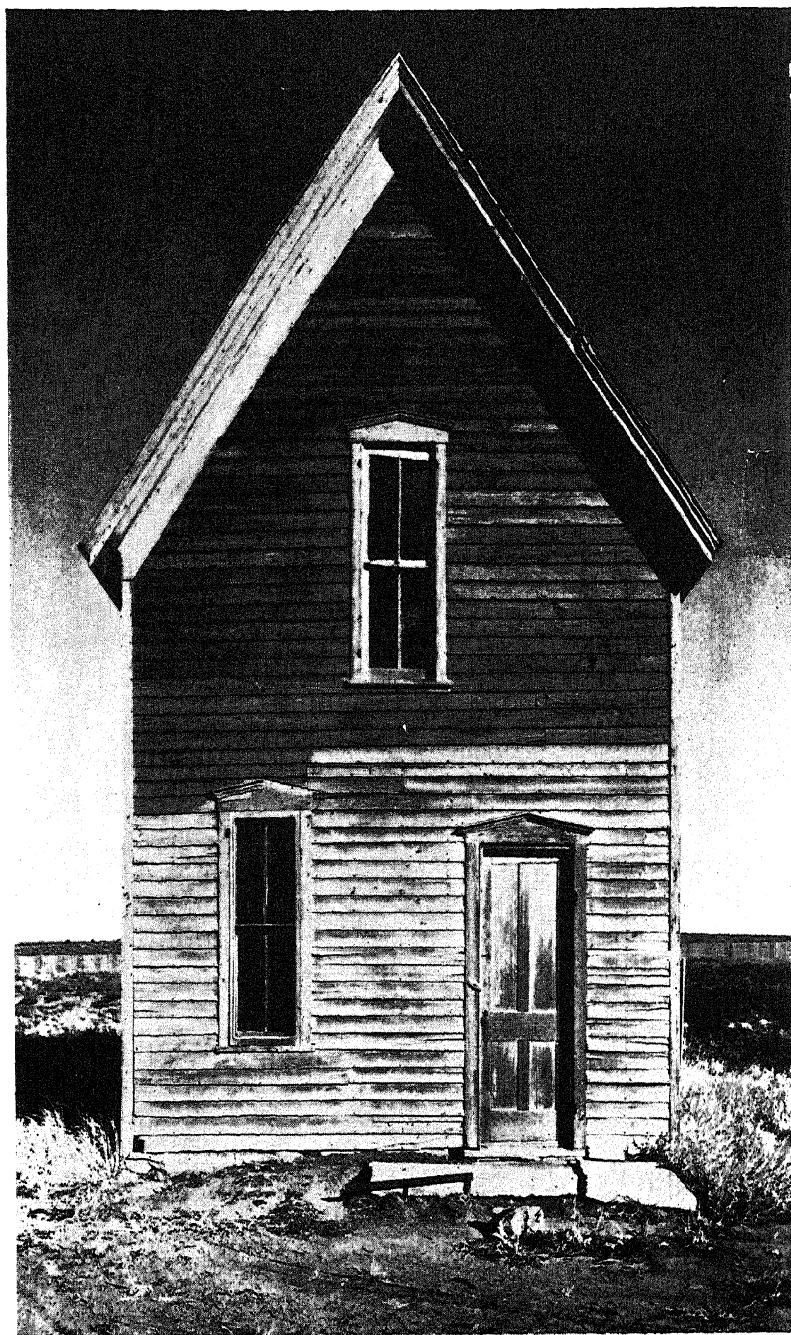
THEY went down Clybourne to Diversey. Domiano walked in front, Scire walked behind. Lamonica walked along the curb. Flipped butts were short, dropped butts might be long. At the Plaza the MARK OF ZORRO was on. Tom Mix could beat hell out of him. They went down Diversey to Clarke. Down the line of Checkered Cabs was the sky. At the end a woman went by on a horse. They looked at her and then they looked at the horse. When it passed they looked at the trees and the empty sky. A woman carrying a dog came out and got into a car. The dog barked at Scire and Scire thumbed at the dog. The car went slow down to Michigan and the dog looked back through the glass. Domiano and Scire thumbed. They crossed Michigan to the Lake. The sun was on the three mile house and a freighter wore a smoke feather. Then there was only the feather.

That shows it's round, Lamonica said.

Then they went on down toward the sand.

BENITO MOLINO

BENITO MOLINO's new wife swept the sidewalk. Benito Molino turned on the lights. He stood behind the cans of tomatoes and watched his new wife sweep. She was a Rizzuto and a good sweeper. Mr. Ciano came out and looked up toward the Keystone. Mr. Deutsch came out and looked at Mr. Ciano. Between them Benito's new wife swept the sidewalk. She was a good sweeper but she rested standing sideways. Sideways between Mr. Deutsch and Mr. Ciano. Benito Molino rapped his ring on the glass. Mrs. Molino didn't seem to hear. Benito Molino stopped piling cans and came out to help Mrs. Molino—he showed her how he, Benito, swept the sidewalk. He showed her how to high pile cans in the window. He lit a cigar and offered one to Mr. Ciano.



MR. SHULTS

THE sidewalk ended and he turned into the road. A little boy and his dog walked into the sun to watch him pass. They watched the yellow dust puff out from beneath his shoes.

I'm Donald—said the little boy.

He smiled.

This is my dog—

My—my . . . he said, and walked on by. The little boy's mother came out on the porch and called. The little boy and his dog watched the dust puff down the road. He stopped to rest where a small creek cooled the shade. He took off his shoes and let his feet droop in the water. Back in the road the little boy was puffing dust.

When the sun woke him up he bent down to wet his face and the little boy's dog stood up to watch. The little boy lay asleep with his feet in the water. Down the road came the little boy's mother.

LUKE

HE wanna go—but he doan wanna kill no one. He jus wanna help, but he say if he help he gotta go. But he look an walk so sidesaddle I jus doan know. An it break his heart to learn he doan walk right. He allus been so proud of his walkin, so relaxed like. Like he say, he can go on an on—all he need is time. Mister Yancey be so sad to see him go. He so honest for a black man Mister Yancey say. He drop pennies aroun jus to show they come back, sometimes even more than he drop Mister Yancey say. He all the time showin off how much he think of him. Leavin him to make change an sell gas by hisself. He say he jus can't unahstan why Luke come so black when he so white-like in all hiss ways. He allus say it 'when Luke aroun to make him glad. Now he can't unahstan why Luke wanna leave. Now he say some the pennies he drop jus doan come back. I doan kno—maybe Luke jus tired of pickin 'em up. Maybe he worried bout too much stoopin for a soljur man. Or maybe he jus foun out what all them pennies is for. Soften some of the ache when he hear how sidesaddle he grown.

RUBY

SHE was set on me learnin to read—so I learned to read. I found there was a place for it and nothin more. I said I have come to read and she looked at me. What would you like to read she said and I said I would like to read it all—and she laughed and laughed and was just like a kid. Why are you laughin at me I said? Because, she said—All was too big for one man. Then why, I said, was I learnin to read? And she laughed some more but I seen she didn't know. And I left and walked where the levee was piled high. And there was the river movin south and clouds driftin to the east and overhead geese honkin still another way. And I seen a dog know where he'd left a bone. And the sun went off where there weren't even geese to fly and the night stood up behind me like a hill and there were stars where ther'd been nothin at all. And I seen all of these things knew where to go. And I said, what else is there to study on? So I come home—and Ruby seen I knew it all.

FURMAN YOUNG

IT SAY if you got religion an if it aint for killin you doan need to go. It say if you like that maybe you can do somethin peaceful like. Makin bullets maybe—or makin . . .

That what it say?

That what it mean—

What if I just aint for killin all by myself? What if I come to see one killin make two men dead? I believe I right, he believe he right, but one place we right at same time. Killin change a man by makin him dead, that's all. Nothin else change except more people make more people dead. I come to be all for livin now. I say killin's hard—I say dyin's harder—but I say livin is hardest yet. Any dam fool die for somethin—take a man live it out. Dyin hurt bad once, livin hurt bad every day. Have to get up after bein killed and die all over again. So what I say—? Just say I for livin, that's all. Ready an willin for lotta livin, all unready for lotta dyin, not around for the killin at all, Just say that's what Uncle Sam mean to me—me to Uncle Sam. Then I put a cross an you sign it Furman Young.

DWIGHT

THERE'S no one thing to cover the people, no one sky. There's no one dream to sleep with the people, no one prayer. There's no one hope to rise with the people, no one way or one word for the people, no one star. For these people are the people, and this is their land. And there's no need to cover such people—they cover themselves.

FURTHER EXCERPTS FROM “CHATEAU D'ARGOL”

JULIEN GRACQ

Translated by Francis Golfing

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Last year we published in the *Surrealist anthology* a small fragment from “Chateau d'Argol,” the very striking post-Surrealist novel by Julien Gracq, which was one of the last manifestations of free French literary experiment before the collapse. A strange and compelling book, one that seems to take off afresh from the ground of Surrealism, “Chateau d'Argol” deserves serious American attention. We offer here in translation Gracq's preface, a summary of the main portion of the book chapter by chapter, and a translation of the final chapter entire. . . think Mr. Golfing has caught very well the peculiar style of the work, with its special overtones and values.)

PREFACE TO “CHATEAU D'ARGOL”

IT is perhaps unnecessary to introduce a narrative whose contents show clearly—and for that no apology will be offered—certain affinity to a school of writing which was the only one—and this fact need no longer be discussed—to bring into the post war period something more than the mere hope for a renewal and, indeed, to revive the wan delights of the explorer's primeval paradise. The transfiguring power and the lightning efficacy of certain apparitions—by no means illusory—flashing upon a pavement, in an empty room, in a forest, at the turn of a road, and their capacity of marking forever with their claws those whom they thus entrap: all these notions have since become too familiar to be insisted upon any longer. In this new light, however, cer

tain ill-defined human problems may find explanation; problems forever exciting, if judged by the emphasis most religions have put on them in their theodicies, especially the religion of salvation. For, to be quite concrete, the intercessor could be disregarded only at the risk of draining the act of grace of all its efficacy. For *intercessor* I might substitute either *savior* or *condemner*, the two ideas being dialectically inseparable. Even this unfrequented path has attracted some cultivators. The work of Wagner closes upon a poetic testament which Nietzsche thoughtlessly threw open to the Christians. He thus assumed the grave responsibility of misleading the critics into a type of research which is so obviously superficial that the very shame we feel at hearing people talk to this day of the "acquiescence of the master in the Christian mystery of redemption" should make us realize that *Parsifal* signifies something quite other than the ignominy of extreme unction on a corpse which, moreover, shows itself too clearly recalcitrant.

This misconception becomes even more disturbing when one considers how consistent an effort Wagner made to widen more and more the orbit of his subterranean or, more precisely, his *infernal* research. And if this slender narrative could pass for a *demoniac* version—as such perfectly authorized—of that masterpiece, there might be hope that this fact alone may open the eyes of those who are still unwilling to see.

The circumstances ordinarily termed *scabrous*, which encompass the action of this novel, are but incidental to it. On second thought, I believe that an honest scrutiny cannot but regard them as the instinctive gesture of a very comprehensible modesty. Only genius can in such a case dispense with a "Don't make any mistake about it." The inalterable resistance of phenomena such as I have described to any kind of solicitation, however familiar, should be understood as the only reason for the moderate suitability of this narrative "to be put into the hands of everybody."

It goes without saying that it would be very naive to consider under a symbolical angle certain objects, acts or circumstances

which at some crossroads of this book seem to erect the untoward silhouette of a signpost. The symbolical explanation is generally such a ludicrous impoverishment of the overwhelming force inherent in each incident of real or imaginary life that, to the exclusion of any indicatory idea, the simple, crude and accessible notion about each incident, about the *strong* and the *weak* circumstances, can always, and here particularly, be advantageously substituted. The vigor—in itself convincing—of what the metaphysicians call the *data* should, in life as well as in books, forever exclude all those concealments of the silly symbolical phantasmagory and prompt us, once and for all, to a decisive act of purification.

As regards the machinery which in this narrative has been set going here and there, and which serves to release the unwieldy springs of terror, special care has been taken not to make it be and, above all, not to make it *appear*, novel, and consequently allow it to act, some distance in advance, as an alarm signal. The ever effective repertory of tottering castles, of sounds, of lights, of spectres in the night and of dreams enchants us especially by dint of its complete familiarity; and, since it gives to the feeling of uneasiness an indispensable virulence—through apprising us that we *will* shudder—it could not be discarded without committing one of the grossest errors of taste. As in the case of the stratagems of war, which but renew themselves through copying one another, and thus make us feel that mixture of creative dizziness, of glory and of melancholy, which seizes us at the thought that the battle of Friedland is repeated at Cannes, and Leuctra at Rossbach—so the writer cannot conquer but under these sanctioned if infinitely multipliable signs. Could here be mobilized the powerful marvels of the *Mysteries of Udolpho*, of the *Castle of Otranto* and of the *House of Usher* to impart to these feeble syllables a little of the magic spell still lingering in their chains, their phantoms and their coffins, the author could but render more explicit his homage for the enchantment they have always inexhaustibly shed on him.

A SUMMARY OF THE FIRST NINE CHAPTERS OF "CHATEAU D'ARGOL"

I. ARGOL

ALBERT, a highly gifted young Frenchman of distinguished family, who seems destined to become a prominent figure in the literary circles of Paris, decides to travel instead and to absorb whatever knowledge the universities of Germany and Italy can impart. Everybody is impressed by his mind and his manner; the women, in particular, are both attracted and puzzled by his *blasé* and nonchalant attitude. After having absorbed all he wanted to absorb, he buys a castle in a rather bleak and desolate part of Brittany, in order to pursue his philosophical studies undisturbedly. His favorite author is Hegel, whose dialectic system fascinates him. He arrives at Argol; the castle appeals to him, even though he is struck by a certain disparity of architecture. The main part of the building is gothic and gloomy; another more recent wing is built in the Italian baroque style. After spending the first day exploring the castle and its peculiar atmosphere, he finds toward evening a letter in the dining-room, put there by the butler, which announces the arrival of Herminien and Heide.

II. THE CEMETERY

Albert plunges into the whirlpool of Hegel's *Logic* and is deeply stirred by the philosopher's aversion to instinctive life and spontaneous impulse. He is determined to lead the life of a recluse and scholar and to remain scornful of society. On the other hand, Herminien's imminent arrival exercises his mind continually, and he tries to account for the strange attraction his friend has always exerted. Compared with Albert, Herminien is more realistic, more attached to life, and more analytical; his nonchalant irony fills Albert with a mixture of admiration and

fear. Of Heide he knows nothing but vague rumours, which furnish no clue to this mysterious personality; even Heide's sex is unknown to him. The next day he rides out on horseback, filled with a curious feeling of expectancy; he eventually comes upon a ruinous and overgrown cemetery near the sea. He notices one large cross, standing apart from the rest, which seems to him a symbol of either Life or Death; and, following an unaccountable urge, he takes a pointed stone and engraves the name HEIDE on the cross.

III. HEIDE

Herminien and Heide arrive. The latter turns out to be a woman, whose radiant beauty does not fail to impress Albert deeply. As for the kind of relationship existing between Herminien and Heide, he is completely in the dark. They sit down to dinner; the conversation becomes more and more interesting, and Albert discovers that Heide is not only cultivated but also learned. Albert and Herminien sound and probe one another and realize that they are still united by ties of mutual fascination and, as it were, accompliceship. And yet, all of a sudden, looking at each other over the dinner table, they become aware that *something has changed*. Heide is the cause of this change. To lessen his inner tension, Albert leads Heide onto the terrace. While they are looking down from the balustrade, Heide takes his hand, turns him toward her, and kisses him. Meanwhile Herminien is absorbed in gloomy meditations. He realizes that, in considering his attitude toward Heide detached, he had deluded himself; and, also, that some instinct of self-destruction, some sinister *fatality* had prompted him to bring Heide to Argol, anticipating, in his sub-consciousness, that Albert's brilliant personality would rouse a sudden passion in Heide.

IV. HERMINIEN

Heide grows more and more attached to Albert, at the same time continually aware that something sinister and destructive is

brewing. Albert remains relatively unresponsive, for two reasons: he spurns easy triumphs—and Heide had not offered any resistance—; secondly, he remembers how remote Heide appeared at first sight, and he has a feeling that her total abandonment is somehow incongruous and not quite compatible with her real self. It offers, in other words, no real *solution* of the situation. Furthermore, the relationship between Heide and Herminien still alarms him; there is something magnetic about the way in which she reacts to him, something demoniac, something outside the orbit of human contacts. Herminien, on the other hand, seems to know everything about his own relations with Heide, which are rather simple and obvious; he comments on those relations obliquely and with supreme irony, thus imparting an air of subtlety and intricacy to them which is, and always will be, absent from the actual love-affair. Herminien spends his days in apparent idleness on his bed, dreaming of Heide, who to him represents Life or, more precisely, Vitality. He has a feeling as if Heide's daily walks with Albert drained him of all his vital resources; and only in the evenings he is able to gain a spurious kind of intellectual triumph over Albert. Heide remains impervious to his biting irony.

V. THE TRIP TO THE BEACH

One hot morning they decide to go swimming in the gulf, not far from the cemetery Albert had visited on the day after his arrival. They undress and venture far out into the open sea. All three are filled with a fierce joy,—a joy that has something of despair in it. They swim on and on, giving themselves up to the element, for they know that there is *no turning back*. The situation has become insoluble. The thought of certain death seems to unite them; they are like one body doomed to annihilation. But, without realizing it, they have in fact taken a detour leading back to the shore; mortally fatigued they arrive there.

VI. THE CHAPEL OF PERDITION

One day Albert follows a path leading along the verge of a deep chasm. The scenery is sinister and evocative of crime and tragedy. At the bottom of the abyss he beholds a river, illumined by the sun and mirroring the trees; then suddenly Herminien's image appears *below the water level*. He is strangely attired and seems to greet Albert with a sad meditative smile. He now beckons to Albert, who follows the call. They walk along, each on one side of the river, the rapid torrent between them, until they reach a dilapidated chapel. They enter. The chapel is full of ancient tombstones with illegible inscriptions. All of a sudden the sounds of an organ strike Albert's ear: it is Herminien, who improvises on the instrument. After many tentatives, discordant but fascinating, a harmonious strain emerges: it is the song of *virile brotherhood*.

VII. THE FOREST

Days of continuous rain follow. The three members of the group seek the solitude; they all have the feeling of a unit *breaking asunder*. Albert remembers Herminien's organ-playing; it appears to him that the friend's improvisation was an appeal to divine forces to protect him against the hosts of hell. One afternoon, looking down from his window, he sees Heide and Herminien leave the castle together. Herminien is carrying a gun slung around his shoulder. Albert is seized with a feeling of danger and, at the same time, of complete solitude. After a while he too leaves the castle and ventures into the forest. Fatigued, he lies down on the mossy ground near a spring. His thoughts grow confused. When he opens his eyes again, he beholds Heide's bare body stretched out before him. Her hands are tied behind her back, and a thin trickle of blood filters from her fists into the spring.

VIII. THE ALLEY

Herminien has left the castle; nobody knows where he has gone. Albert feels strangely invigorated and full of a wild energy

without an object. He is haunted by the vision of Heide's dead and mutilated body; at the same time he misses Herminien. Heide, too, is thinking of Herminien, who *annihilated* her, as it were, in order to make her emerge re-born in the arms of Albert. One day Albert and Heide, roaming through the forest, find a geometrically straight alley running through the wild and luxuriant growth. They follow the road, which seems to go on forever, as though it were to symbolize *pure direction*. But, looking back, they realize that behind them the avenue seems to peter out and to be blocked by thicket and underbrush. It is a *blind alley*; so they go on, as if under a spell. Eventually they arrive on a vast plateau; and they perceive with alarm that other alleys, exactly alike to the one they had taken, run onto the plateau from all sides. They are seized with a feeling of inexplicable *necessity*, against which no weapon avails. Presently they see a riderless horse gallop toward them, and they recognize Herminien's favorite horse. Nearby Herminien is lying; he is badly hurt. They take him back to the castle. While Herminien is recovering in his locked room, Albert is haunted by reminiscences of their days in Paris, when they used to walk at night through the narrow lanes. On those occasions they had often heard an indistinct murmur filling the sky,—the murmur of a devout, kneeling crowd; and they both knew that those voices were praying for the soul of Herminien, who was *sentenced to death*.

IX. THE CHAMBER

One day, while Herminien is away, Albert penetrates into his friend's chamber. The atmosphere of the room is full of an enigmatic poignancy. He approaches the bookshelves and recognizes many books which they both used to study: Schelling, Fichte and other metaphysical writers. While he glances over a set of engravings, all representing feminine faces filled with religious passion and, in some instances, *inundated by grace*, he suddenly hears the last strains of the piece Herminien had played on the organ. On a separate table beside the bed he finds an engraving

that shows the dying King Amfortas, surrounded by his knights; Parsifal bends over him, touching his side with the mystical lance. Yet, with diabolical cunning the artist made the figure of the Divine Savior *pale* before the effulgence of the blood trickling from Amfortas' wound. Moreover, it was evident that the liquid which sparkled in the Grail was nothing other than the blood of the dying king; the implication being that the *savior quality* can never be obtained, even though it is always virtually existent. Parsifal's countless sufferings and vicissitudes were to no avail; they did not make him any *worthier* of finding the Holy Blood. The artist himself paraphrased his view on a scroll of parchment, suspended on an iron ring in the wall, which read: *Redemption unto the Redeemer.*

THE DEATH: CHAPTER TEN OF
"CHATEAU D'ARGOL"

HERMINIEN's health seemed soon completely restored, and he and Albert were again engaged in those interminable conversations, revived not only by the force of custom but chiefly by the exciting pleasure they felt at the thought that one subject was now taboo. The presence of Heide, whom Albert saw but in rare intervals and whose life, vegetative and consumed by a fanatic love, passed away in the penumbra of her chamber, remained vivid in his heart. Those conversations, on the other hand, became to him soon a source of daily *anguish*, whose sudden shock struck his heart whenever the nonchalant steps of his friend echoed at a turn of the corridor. And yet, never had the vigor of their thoughts been more lucid and never the clear depth of their analyses more infallible than now, when they examined the most abstruse notions of philosophy and, particularly, of esthetics. But, at times, having touched the core of a complex question, they felt the mingled sound of their voices suddenly suspended; their thoughts ebbed like the waves of a sea troubled down to its depths, and the meeting of their glances was like the silent flash of a sword. Meanwhile the days passed one after the other, carrying with them the last traces of Herminien's illness, and Albert felt the hour of departure approaching; a fatal hour, for he *could not part* with Herminien any more, and all the forces of his mind invoked—like the sudden overflow of refreshing waters—the catastrophe that would decide over life and death but which, at the same time, would in an instant relieve him of the terrible nervous tension pervading his whole system ever since that walk in the woods. The days, as they were taking flight, increasingly brief and sombre, endowed Herminien's presence—more uncertain every time—with a frightening and ominous charm; and Albert wished that with the irony of cries and with tears of ardent supplication he could have detained this dark and

fraternal angel, this Visitor wrapped in a dusky cloak, who was steeped in so fatal a mystery and whose departure would forever annihilate any chance of *knowing*.

In the course of these familiar and casual conversations it soon became apparent that Herminien had employed the days which were spent away from Argol for research of a particularly exact and meticulous kind. This research had led him to explore the least known among the Breton archives on the subject of the castle and its construction, which seemed to date back as far as the Norman invasions and the bloody battles in which the Bretons—but recently landed on these melancholy shores—had tried to repulse the invader. His discoveries, which brought to light a very minute map of the primitive construction—a rare specimen, which he had been able to borrow for a brief period from a museum—, seemed convincing; and, on a livid December afternoon, which promised them complete *idleness*, Herminien suggested to Albert with singular emphasis that they should verify the existence of a certain secret passage. On the parchment only the *entrance* was clearly indicated, as if its destination should remain hidden at all costs; and neither the reminiscences of the servants nor the numerous legends so popular with common country-folk—legends of which Argol was the disquieting center—contained the slightest hint of it.

They descended into the big living-room, which the fuliginous pallor of the sky, made darker yet by the heavy silken draperies, filled with lugubrious gloom. Albert approached the window and divided the curtains for a moment. Opaque clouds scudded across the sky, heralding an imminent thunderstorm, and the wind filled the bare woods with a fierce and continuous whistling. The atrocious desolation of those boundless stretches invaded his heart like a cold sword. Meanwhile Herminien, who had taken some mason-tools out of a bag, started to probe the wall on the very spot where the map indicated the secret aperture. Soon they were both devoting bizarre and absorbing attention to those blows directed against the smooth wall, which

seemed to echo through the remotest corridors of the castle like sharp blows inflicting a wound. For a long time their efforts seemed vain; but suddenly Herminien, whose hands were pressed against the wall in order to discover some interstices, inadvertently touched the head of a strong copper nail, which supported the high window-curtains; and now the strange click of some secret mechanism could be heard. One of the wainscot-sections which decorated the corner of the wall revolved readily around itself and disclosed a sombre and gaping orifice. A whiff of cold air touched their faces; Herminien seized one of the copper torches from the nearby console and asked Albert to follow him.

In the dim and flickering light of the torch, which Herminien held, it became evident that the dilapidated vault—accomplice of some secret and criminal passion—had been abandoned since time immemorial. Coarse siftings of plaster had fallen from the narrow ceiling and were scattered all over the floor; and the leprous walls, which carried the persistent dampness of the climate underground, seemed covered with a whitish efflorescence. The peculiar odor of wood that has long been exposed to moisture reached their nostrils. While they threaded their way with difficulty through rubbish and over fallen beams that were eaten away by time, Albert noticed with a feeling of *malaise* that the long cobwebs, whose meshes imprisoned the dust of centuries and whose tight net should have extended over the whole width of the vault, had been torn by a recent passage and were now *hanging* down along the wall, which they covered with their dirty draperies, thus leaving the center of the corridor inexplicably free.

The direction of the subway, which was constantly cut by abrupt angles, did not fail to baffle them completely. However, after climbing up several wooden steps, old and ruinous, which from time to time relieved the monotony of the sombre corridor, they realized that an exit into one of the upper stories of the castle was undoubtedly possible. But when Albert ventured this remark, with a passionate ardor which, considering its insignifi-

cance, seemed incongruous and surprising to himself, Herminien received it with an impenetrable silence. They soon found themselves stopped by a wall, made of coarse oaken boards; and Albert's heart beat with an emotion stronger than mere curiosity. Meanwhile Herminien reached with meticulous haste into the dark, until he struck the secret mechanism governing this last egress. The heavy oaken panel glided noiselessly, and Albert and Herminien found themselves in Heide's room. An all but complete darkness reigned in the chamber at this late hour; the effluence of a penetrating perfume floated about the furred garments and the light draperies and stamped on all objects the seal of such a secret intimacy that Albert and Herminien halted as though on the threshold of some forbidden spot. Albert's eyes then dwelt on the bed, which seemed to preserve, in curves infinitely graceful and voluptuous, the recent imprint of a woman's body,—a woman who seemed to overwhelm it still with her rich and omnipotent splendor and with the ravishing heaviness of her tired limbs. His whole body was seized with a horrified trembling. They both remained silent for a long time. If Albert had now turned his eyes from the depth of his anguish toward his friend, he might have perceived the sharp smile lighting up Herminien's face; a smile whose indubitable and scabrous *insolence* betrayed an awareness of his own imperturbable mastery, and which seemed to confirm the singular detachment he had shown throughout the whole exploration, which he had directed in all its details with the coolness of a spectator who forestalls the outcome with perfect lucidity. Gradually the darkness in the room became complete, and the reddish reflexes of the torch—now all but burnt out—were its sole illumination. It was like a death-watch, to which the protracted silence imparted a character of unbearable solemnity. When they again penetrated into the subway, its sordid gloom seemed to give them an unexpected feeling of *cheer*.

The evening passed sombre and silent for Albert. In vain he sought rest in the freshness and night of his pillows—: the nitrous

atmosphere, opaque and choking, that had accumulated at the approach of the December storm, kept all sleep from him and, half raised on his bed, he remained listening for a long time to the curiously close beat of the raindrops against the window pane. They seemed to be chased unceasingly by the furious thrusts of the wind, from the very heart of a night stirred in its depths. No, such a night was not made for sleep! With a hand that shook feverishly he lighted a torch on a table nearby and, from the shadowy depth of his room, he saw his own enigmatic face, reflected in the high crystal mirror, move toward him. During those last weeks his face had undergone a terrifying change; his strong constitution seemed completely shattered by an ailment whose symptoms were not derived from any common illness. His dilated nostrils, whose all but transparent partitions gave him an air of high spirituality, had acquired a waxen consistence, that seemed to betray a slow decay of the live tissue. A bitter wrinkle marked his lips. But it was his eyes, reflected from the depth of this glassy darkness, which more than anything else struck him with such disgust and horror that he seized the copper torch and hurled it furiously against the mirror, whose innumerable fragments covered the floor instantaneously. For his eyes, which burnt with the quivering clearness of a beacon in their hollow sockets, were transfigured by the habitual expression of an inexplicable fear, and their deep devastation now testified an indisputable familiarity. Then, in the darkness now grown total, the image of that tormenting night rose from the depths of his memory like a bubble of poisonous gas; and on that resplendent bed, decked with white draperies, which he had seen for a trice in the light of the torch, Heide's bare body began to recline. She challenged the bed with all the fresh lips of her overwhelming impress; and, near her, like a dark and destructive angel rejoicing at the frantic and petrifying delights of sacrilege, Herminien seemed to keep his fixed stare riveted on the fascinating wound. Then, suddenly everything around them seemed to vanish, and between him and this atrocious and obsessive pair the abysses of

humid night seemed to roll, tearing asunder a space without bourn. He felt thrown back farther and farther, forever cut off, forever alone, without refuge, without pardon, without any possibility of redemption, removed from that which had been and would be *no more*. "No more." In his delirium he uttered the words in an undertone, and the bizarre sound of these syllables—spoken by a strange mouth, as it were, so deeply was he absorbed in the intensity of his vision—awakened him suddenly. With meticulous slowness and a precision of movement that formed a disconcerting contrast to the first insane impulse, and which seemed to bear witness to a second stage comparable to that of a somnambule, he rose and dressed. For a moment he pushed the high window open and leaned on his elbows, burying his perspiring brow in his hands; the soul of Herminien, suddenly fraternal and reconciled, seemed to visit him in the blowing of the wind and to touch his forehead with an icy freshness, with a peace stronger even than that of death. He then took from a piece of furniture a carved poniard and, with a distraught smile, tested its point with one finger. He closed the window, as if vexed at the yellow illumination the thunderstorm added to his paroxysm and, walking quickly across the deserted corridors, he finally reached the big living-room. The secret panel glided effortless and with a slowness bizarre and all but solemn under his fingers.

Many hours after, he was roused from the depth of a heavy and dreamless night by shouts that echoed through the whole length of the castle. The abnormal and alarmingly urgent character of those shouts—they had wakened him from a sleep nearly as deep as the sleep of inebriation—gave him a sudden semi-consciousness of the significant *lapse of time* that had passed while he was outside his room; and, filled with profound anguish, he hastily threw a cloak around his shoulders and ran toward Heide's room. Heide expired; and the pallor apparent on all faces betrayed that it was too late for help. A nearby phial, still half filled with a sombre liquid, indicated to what omnipotent help she had resorted in those moments, when she wanted to quit a life whose

last ties—the only ones she had ever considered valid—were sundered that very night in such a fatal and unforeseen manner. Her face, buried in the pillows and covered with her bloodless hands—a powerless gesture of childlike protection—gave evidence that even before the slow approach of desired death, in the anguish of terrible haste, she had sought surcease of her torments in the *streams* of a night without stars and without morning, which now seemed to shroud her all around in a surprising peace and under an immense density. The unexpected horror of this last gesture, which seemed, in the face of both heaven and men, to bear crushing evidence against him, made tears gush from his eyes and from his throat, reinforced by the bitter and burning sobs of damnation. Burying his hands and lips in the folds of her gown of innocence, he tried to revive her cold face with insane kisses and, throwing himself on her deranged bed in a lugubrious embrace, he meant to dispute her body that was already, according to laws forever *different*, down to its most secret molecules conquered, subjugated and enthralled. With a protracted and savage cry he fainted.

The preparations for her funeral were soon completed. The sun hid itself behind thick layers of fog when Albert and Herminien, carrying on their shoulders Heide's fragile coffin, their hair dreadfully disheveled by the last passing of the hurricane, threaded their way slowly toward the cemetery by the sea. Their *macabre* journey—through a mist flaky and unreal, that hung on everywhere to the rugged heath-land and stifled the sound of their steps and the monotonous creaking of the hurriedly joined planks—was strangely silent. They reached the bottom of the bay, and Albert, with his lips close against Herminien's ear, reminded his friend in a low whisper through what decisive and now particularly sinister coincidence Heide's grave had been *chosen* a long time ago. Once more they read the inscription on the stone, and Herminien nodded silent assent. They dug the grave and lowered the coffin into its damp bed; then Albert, who had gathered a handful of dry sand, bent over the tomb in an

attitude of fierce composure and let filter through his fingers the flow of sparse hot grains like a libation to Death. One could see how the metallic shower rebounded from the green planks, leaving behind an oppressive echo.

The evening found Albert and Herminien united in the big living-room, whose festive lights, shining for them alone in all their splendor as if for a macabre *fête*, illumined the vast solitudes down to their very core. For the first time Herminien apprised Albert of his imminent departure and, with the emphasis of a *decision* now irrevocable, he described the singular circumstances under which Death had visited the castle. He spoke particularly of the grave responsibility he had shouldered by luring into these lugubrious solitudes a being for whom the rapports they had entertained had always had—quite apart from their hazardous and definable character—the striking (and he bizarrely insisted on that word) stigma of a *mischance* to be verified at any moment. Yet even though all these reasons were pronounced in an orderly fashion and with a savagely ironic semblance of *common sense*, Herminien could not help noticing that Albert's air of all but complete resignation and, indeed, of apparent *indifference*, displayed throughout the whole wearisome argument, without any doubt concealed some hidden thought. The fact that he could but dimly guess its cause cast an ever growing shadow of uneasiness over the rest of the evening. Herminien seemed to protract his explanations deliberately, as if he wanted to study as long as possible—and with the concentrated passion always attendant on problems of life or death—Albert's pale and immobile face. But behind that white, luminous and impassive brow, among the fantastic reflexes cast from all sides by the torches, nothing could be deciphered. They finally separated and retired into the upper stories of the castle.

Sleep did not visit Herminien that night. The moon had hardly begun to inundate the sky with its full luster, when he got up and sat down on a stone bench near the window. The forest, bathed in silvery shimmer, breathed the immobile sweetness

of sleep. The river seemed to sparkle quite close under the shining network of mist. Yes, Argol was peaceful under these stars, on the bottom of these misty nets, and quite closed upon itself in a space filled with translucent and enchanted air. And yet, this tranquil and sweet night was the night of the *great departure*, for Herminien's eyes could no longer lie—nor could the eyes of Albert. Before parting in the big living-room they exchanged a solemn promise, and Herminien felt the thrill of fabulous kingliness.

He thought a long time of his youth, of all the years he had known Albert, and of the threads that had woven between them those *unavowable* ties, whose falling coil would tonight both strangle and reunite them. When they were still very small,—and even then the most abstruse and confounding problems of theology used to rouse their passionate interest—Albert had called Herminien his *damned soul*.

In the middle of the long December night, down the deserted stairs and through the deserted halls, past torches burnt out and overturned, he left the castle in traveler's garb. His steps led him very quickly—for he walked fast in the cold night—to the magic alley, which Albert and Heide had followed on a fatal day. His floating coat-tails enclosed him like a pair of dark wings. Behind him, and in his mind, which they touched in those acute regions where the exacerbated senses dwell, steps echoed, coming out of the icy night—were those his own steps? They came toward him, out of the night, and he recognized them as if he had been waiting for them all his life. But he did not turn around to face the mystical traveler. *He did not turn around*. He started to run very fast in the middle of the alley, and *the steps* followed him. Losing his breath, he now knew that the steps would catch up with him and, in the total swoon of his whole being, he felt the icy flash of a knife glide through his shoulder blades like a fistful of snow.

THE PARADE

SCENARIO FOR AN ANIMATED CARTOON

EVE MERRIAM

LONG SHOT: white cardboard square. Resolve with blinding speed to close-up, filling entire screen. Lettering as follows: "Poor People! In order to keep you satisfied with your miserable unjust condition, there will be a Parade Today to celebrate Poverty. Twelve Noon. Compulsory. (Otherwise you might not come.)"

Medium shot: mother with baby in arms, grandfather limping and leaning on gnarled cane. All look up at the poster. One sees only their backs. Suddenly the baby starts to cry, points up to the sky. Travelling shot: follow baby's hand pointing to sky, where an enormous neon clock is suspended, the second hand almost at the noon mark. Inscription on clock reads: "Time is Money, so *You* haven't got much time." The woman shifts her baby who cries louder; the old man hobbles after, crying to go slower. But the woman hoists the baby over one shoulder, the baby grabs hold of the old man's cane and they pull him along in that fashion. Now the camera pans to front of them: we see their faces for the first time. The woman and the old man have no features, only serrated wrinkles; while the baby's face is completely blank save for his forehead where letters spell out "Rickets when I'm five!"

Other faceless working people join them, and we can hear the music from the parade tuning up. Drums underneath, fife very shrill above: bagpipe type of eerie music. Nightsticks, dressed like policemen, keep order as the mob moves along. These nightstick-cops have animated badges for faces. They hit out at somebody's legs every so often; and the face-badges prick at

a person's arms here and there aimlessly. Now we come to the street of the parade itself, and as we see it nearer and nearer, the music becomes correspondingly loud.

On the left, stretching the length of the avenue, are the stands for the poor. These are crude imitation-slums made of cardboard and papier-mâché. Washing is strung out on lines, tin cans are battered all over the narrow lanes, garbage is exposed, rats run in and out.

Travelling shot to right: the stands for the rich. Mock penthouses, chromium limousines, dashing open roadsters, streamlined trains. The rich people milling about here, like the poor, have no actual features either. Above their ordinary bodies (elaborately dressed) are various symbols. Ticker tape for many of the men, or dollar marks; for the women, strings of pearls, a fur-piece, a dainty high-heeled sandal, or a glittering bottle of perfume. Most of these people are a little tight, very happy, waving to their friends, greeting others who are arriving late.

Back to opposing side: the poor are gaping admiringly, but are ordered by the nightsticks to get about their business of house-cleaning, caring for the children, taking out the garbage, etc. Some of the poor men set about killing the rats; others stand in dreary lines at soup kitchens.

Terrific fanfare. Drum roll. Immense police whistle. Loud Speaker roars "SI-Lence!" The poor tip-toe about their pantomime of work; the rich become slightly more boisterous. Now the nightstick-cops form a cortege, surrounding a monstrously fat uniformed general, covered from shoes to cap with medals. He is so fat one of the nightsticks has to carry his belly before him like a burnt offering; another of the attendants bears his tremendous rump for him. The noise from the rich stands is quite overbearing by this time, and the nightsticks swing out at the poor, admonishing them to be quiet.

Now Fat General advances to the microphone in front of the reviewing stand where the black-robed judges sit. The General, his attendant with the belly preceding him, and the one with his rump following, moves about with lavish Congressional gestures as he addresses the assemblage. He turns to the poor, smiles ingratiatingly, then looks to the rich and winks widely. "Fellow citizens! This is *your* day, *your* Poverty Parade! We want everybody to have a fine time and enter into the spirit of this grand occasion! First we're gonna sing our song written especially for today, and there'll be favors for everybody after that!" Fat starts the song, the nightsticks wave in rhythm. "Let's be happ-eee [at each 'eee' the rich join in with a Wild West whoop] you and me-eee, living in love-leeee pover-teeee!" Now the nightsticks run up and down, distributing New Years' clackers, paper hats, toy firecrackers, candy to all the rich, while Fat smiles and waves to all the poor. The rich applaud and cheer.

Cut to reviewing stand: the judges look slightly worried. "How is it going?" one of them queries. Fat climbs up and answers him, "Great! They're lovin' it already! And wait'll the girls come on!"

Long shot: chorus of blond girls prance down the street, dressed in brassières and little panties. Music swelling triumphantly. The chorus girls stop in front of the poor, salute them, and sing the following: "Oh, we haven't much to wear, but wadda we care! We're bare and poor it seems, and yet we're rich in drea-ummmss!" Satin beds are wheeled down the street. The girls do a hot dance around them, jump into the beds, pull up the silk coverlets, and get wheeled away, waving lavishly to the poor. The poor meanwhile have been crowding forward to wave in return, but are shoved back to their work by the blue nightsticks.

Close up: Fat leaning to nearest judge, whispering hoarsely, "See? Wad I tell you! They're eatin' it up!"

Camera shifts to rich: they break out into sudden uproarious laughter. Camera follows their looks to a black-face (burnt cork variety) little man with pop eyes like Eddie Cantor and an epileptic manner like Jimmy Durante. This comedian is jumping up and down on a moving platform. The platform stops while he addresses the poor, goes into a buck and wing and sings this song: "Oooohhhh, *you* don't have to dress up in fancy clothes, *you* don't need a hanky to wipe off your nose, oooHHHH, give me the slum, dum dum, that good old slum!" He acts out the motions, gets down on his mammy-knees, claps hands, etc. Continues dancing and singing the second chorus: "Wheerrreeee neighbors are folksy, they share the same toilet, you can't afford steak, so you don't have to broil it, oooHHHH, give me the slum, dum dum, the good old slum!" Now he goes into fast routine, makes funny faces; rich laugh till the tears stream down their faces. The poor meanwhile are standing on tip-toe, elbowing each other, trying to get a glimpse of what is going on, but the nightsticks cuff them back into line every time. Some of the poor, however, hearing all the laughter, join in too, even though they can't see the cause of it.

Cut to Fat, very red and excited, slapping his belly held out in front of him as usual. "It's a panic," he tells the judges. "They're really lovin' it!" Judges still look a trifle dubious, but Fat overrides them, yelling into the microphone, "Now, fellah citizens, a real treat in honor of Poverty Day! An original playlet, written, acted, and directed by that well-loved Stockbond family whom we all love! While I'm tellin' you the cast, the Stockbond butler will hand out the champagne." Butler pops open bottles of Cordon Rouge, sets the fizzing glasses on a large silver tray, and proceeds to hand a drink to everyone in the rich stands. The poor extend their hands, gesturing, some of them very rudely. The butler, however, walks past them. And the general's voice issues from the microphone: "As all you fellah-citizens know, Mr. Stockbond is the well-loved chairman of the board of directors

of the Fit-Rite Company, makers of Fit-Rite, The Gas Mask Perfect. I'm sure we've all seen and loved their beautiful billboards and—what's that, Mr. Stockbond?" (Mr. Stockbond has come up to the General and whispered into his ear.) "Well, that's wonderful! Mighty happy to hear it! Fellah citizens, it gives me great pleasure to be able to tell you, with Mr. Stockbond's permission, that we're all gonna have a chance to *use* his lovely product soon!" (The rich stamp and cheer their approval. The poor follow suit dutifully.) "Yep," continues the General, "most any day now! And so back to our little play, meanwhile. Mr. Stockbond has kindly consented to play himself. And Mrs. Stockbond (the former Louella Tarp, of Tarp's Torpedoes Hit The Spot, you know) is playing *herself*! And their debutante daughter, Miss Consuela Stockbond (who's engaged to that well-loved playboy, Buddy Booney, of Booney's Bombs Best By Test) will play none other than *Miss Consuela Stockbond*! The title of this charming little play is: Why Was I Born To Be Rich? And here come the floats now!"

Cut to the poor, very thrilled. Camera follows them as they watch the first float approaching. On it is Mr. Stockbond, bouncing up and down in a Cadillac sedan, and smoking three giant cigars simultaneously. He sings in a deep Eugene Pallette bass: "Folks just can't relax in Cadillacs. I'd rather be nice and sloppy in some dirty old jallopy! Oh, why was I born to be rich?" He pretends to weep, takes out a large pocket handkerchief and some silver coins fall out (quickly picked up by the nightstick-cops before any of the poor are able to grab them). The float with Consuela comes next: it is a silver Rolls-Royce. She is inside, sprawled out on a maribou chaise longue, dressed in a mink bathrobe. She sings her part, reading from notes: "Between the Cadillac and the crummy Rolls-Royce, there wasn't much choice. I took the Rolls-Royce. Oh, why was I born to be rich?" At this point she looks up from her notes, smiles winningly to the poor who throw kisses to her. She confides to them: "I'm supposed to

cry here, but I hope you'll excuse me. My mascara—it would run, you know. Positively!" The poor clap ecstatically for her as she is wheeled off. And now Mrs. Stockbond is riding along the street. Her float is in the shape of a ship, and Mrs. Stockbond is sitting on the prow. She trills: "Papa took the Cadillac, Consuela the Rolls-Royce. So what have I got? Only the yacht! Oh why was I born to be rich?" She breaks down beautifully into tears. The rich scream their approval, the three Stockbonds leap off their floats and rejoin their friends in the largest penthouse.

There is so much noise from the rich by now, the General has to send a few of the nightsticks to club the poor into keeping still. After a few of the unemployed have had their heads bashed in, the General climbs to the microphone and smiles, indicating a drum roll from the band. After the drum roll, the General announces the climax of the festivities. He directs his remarks exclusively to the poor. "Now, fellah citizens, in your honor, we're gonna close off these glorious celebrations with a contest! Yes, sirree, we're gonna pick out some lovely little lady to be Miss Sweetheart of the Slums!"

Cut to the poor: great excitement. The women all try hurriedly to wash their faces of dirt, comb their hair. One young girl ties on a hair ribbon. Some of the poor men point to their wives or girls, nudge them. The women giggle and look embarrassed.

Back to the General: "And as the treat of treats, Gloria Glamour herself is gonna present the crown in person!" Hubbub breaks out. Wild cheers.

Long shot: on a white horse, Gloria rides down the street. She is dressed in a long white satin gown, sprinkled with diamonds. Her platinum hair is wreathed with orchids. Across her breast a white satin streamer proclaims "It's pure to be poor." She dips into her white suitcase and brings out kisses which she throws to the black-robed judges on the reviewing stand.

Cut to the judges. They climb off their stand, walk in front of the poor, inspecting their rows for a possible Miss Sweetheart of the Slums.

Close up of Gloria riding past. The poor are terribly thrilled at seeing her so close. Some of them hold up their children to touch her gown as she passes. Some of the older boys and girls ask for her autograph. Gloria waves to them, throws away the silver pencil from her suitcase, and tells them she cannot sign her name for them since she has no pencil.

Cut back to judges: still looking among the poor. The prospective prettiest are shoved forward. The drums roll in anticipation. The judges confer, approach one of the poor girls. Suddenly Gloria darts off her horse, rushes into one of the slum houses and strips. Underneath her white gown she is wearing calico shorts; a mock hobo-pack on a stick is slung over her bare shoulder. The judges pick her out, set her up on the reviewing stand, and crown her as Miss Sweetheart of the Slums. The General proclaims the parade officially over; the rich men crowd around Gloria, and the nightsticks get the poor to move along, who look back at Gloria all the while. But before they are shoved out of the way, they are ordered to pass an elderly ugly woman in gold lamé, seated inside a gold booth. A sign over her booth reads: "Help the poor poor." All the poor are told by the nightsticks to contribute to the gold-box the woman is holding. They all drop in their pennies. The woman snatches at the coins just as they are dropped into the slit, and hands the coins to Mr. Stockbond who has just rushed up to her side, his face smeared with Gloria's lipstick. Mr. Stockbond takes the coins and jingles them in his pockets. Fade out with clink of coins.

CRAZY MAN IN THE SUBWAY

EVE MERRIAM

WHEN Narden entered the subway train, everything was exactly as usual. Crude wooden slats enclosed each seated passenger; lidless cardboard boxes were slipped over the faces of all the standing ones, some of whom suspended themselves from the straps, breathing mouth to crowded mouth as in a night-deed of passion. Others were pushed against each other with every sputter of the car's motion, their buttocks touching, their breasts and hips intimate. No one spoke.

The only break in the pattern was at the far end of the car; two fat-voiced women who had come in just before Narden. They had been talking together on the platform, and now he noticed they had torn their separating boards apart to sit more closely. Both of them worked fast to place the extra slats so that now, though they were clasped arm to inner arm, on their outer sides they were barricaded doubly.

Of everyone else, some sat passively in the stocks, a few were lipping newspapers, most of the others climbed to the high-held advertising cards. A girl in a red hat, a boy next her in a green-checked suit, shriveled to unloved gray beneath the bristling colors of a mammoth orange cereal container, of a huge pink face fish-mouthed to expose terribly pink gums.

Narden bent eagerly to the girl in the now-pallid hat. "You and I—," he began, and shrank back in pain; at his approach, the girl had hammered the wooden boards around her more tightly, one of the blows struck his face.

"You then—," he recovered and turned to the spectacled man standing beside him who rode this same car as he himself did, every day, twice a day. The man adjusted his glasses coldly and bedded himself back in the pillowless folds of his paper. But Narden kept staring at him so that it was impossible to get on with his sporting page.

"What do you want?" the man with the glasses finally asked, his voice muffled behind the cardboard covering his face. "I'm not a rich man. I'm only a bookkeeper in an office. I can't afford to be giving out nickels all the time."

"That's it!" Narden shouted, and several of the nearby passengers poked out from their wooden frames. Narden turned to them. "He's a bookkeeper in an office!"

The man with the glasses spoke with a deep instantaneous hatred of Narden. "It's nobody's business what I am. I didn't mean to say that. Now take your nickel and get out." His fingers spat a coin onto the floor, and quickly gathered up more cardboard squares, forcing one over the other to conceal his face surely. But Narden grabbed at them, was struggling to tear them off.

"You did say it, though! I don't want your nickel. I'm a bookkeeper myself—we should be friends!"

"No." The man fisted his hands around the cardboard, shoved Narden aside, and ran back to his newspaper, caught up with his true friends, the heavyweight boxer, the singles tennis champion, the golf tournament winner, the beautiful girl skating star.

At the next station a woman holding a little boy in her arms got in; one mask covered them both. Narden addressed the woman politely, "May I hold the little boy for you?"

The woman let the little boy slip out from the mask; Narden stroked the child's hair. "Where do you live?" he asked him. "Are you happy? Have you ever had a popsicle?"

The woman nodded to the child. "Go ahead." The little boy kicked his feet into Narden's chest, leaped back to his mother. She petted him. "That's right. He's no census taker. Don't have to answer!"

Narden tried not to cry out with his pain. He smiled at the child, turned to the mother and spoke softly, "What do you do, madam? Does your husband work? What do you think of the war?"

The woman shook her head sullenly. "Nobody got a right to

snoop around, less'n it's the census." Her voice was stiff and jagged, like a rusted tin-can. Then it softened: the harsh tin melted to a luminous liquid mass. "Or less'n you're aimin' to hand out work. You got washin' to do, mister? Do your shirts real good, mister—no wrinkles in the ironin'. Best worker in—"

"I'm awfully sorry," Narden told her. "I haven't any laundry to give out."

"Then why'd you say you was gonna!" The tin-can jangled along the aisle, finally rolled into a corner as the woman left off scolding to weep. Her son began to kick at Narden again, but an old woman pulled him out of the way. Narden thanked her.

"Is it religion, young man?" The wispy old face beamed out at him insipidly, like a clever vegetable. "If it's religious, you can count on me. I'm very interested in religion, young man. Go to a different church every Sunday. Even been to the Hebrew synagogue once. No difference—they're all interesting. Very inspiring." She grinned and rocked her body back and forth like a baby-doll.

"No, it's not religion," Narden said wearily.

"He's a nut," the boy in the green checked jacket explained. "You know," and he gave the old woman an elaborate wink. She tittered.

Narden held out his hands. "Don't you see? All of us share this same ride every day! And none of you even know my name! It's Narden. John Albert Narden. John after my mother's father. 33 last August. The nineteenth." His words were running on each other, like rain. "I'm a bookkeeper in the J. C. Grant Company. Been there nine and a half years. Make eighteen-fifty a week. I—," he looked at the passengers despairingly; all the wooden slats were locked tight. "Don't any of you care?" he pleaded. "Doesn't anybody even want to know who I am?"

"Sure," the boy in the checked jacket spoke up. Narden went over to him gratefully. "We know who you are, bud," the checked jacket flashed. "You're Santy Claus." Narden drew back; several of the wooden frames relaxed, opened slightly.

"And Santy Claus is dead!" Now many of the frames crooned close together; the girl in the red hat threw a kiss to the boy.

Narden stepped into the center of the car. "It's getting later every minute!" he shouted. "And I don't know any of your names! We're all going to have to die soon enough as it is," he finished hoarsely.

The little boy started to whimper. "Ma, is he gonna kill everybody?"

"Not if I can help it, son," the wispy old woman jumped out of her wooden framework, threw one of the slats at Narden, tripped him with it. "He's a killer! Call the guard. One of you men—haven't you any courage?"

The first fat-voiced woman joined her, ground the splinters of wood into Narden's eyes. He gasped to free himself, but by this time many of the men had broken up the wooden crates all around and were flinging them at him. The second fat-voiced woman yelled "He'll murder us!" and snatched the glasses off the spectacled man, dug them under her heels and forced the broken bits into Narden's mouth.

The guard rushed in. "What's going on here?"

The old woman clambered over the others. "He's an anarchist," she explained simply. "He's trying to blow us all up! He's got a bomb in his pocket."

"There's nothing," Narden said weakly. "Nothing."

"Oh yeah?" The guard tore open Narden's jacket, brought out a half-eaten chocolate bar. "Then wadda ya call this?"

"I was just saving it for after dinner. I ate the other half this morning."

The little boy stopped whimpering, ran through the guard's legs and began to gnaw at the candy. The guard grabbed it back. "Evidence." He held it high out of reach. "Criminal evidence."

No one was paying any attention to him, though; the passengers were all forming a black bird-cloud above Narden's prostrate body, were beaking down invectives at him.

"Please." He was getting weaker all the time. "Tell me some

of your names. I'm Narden. John Albert Narden. For my mother's father. I'd like to know you all. I live at 239 . . . We ought to be friends. We're part of each other. . . ."

"See!" the old woman screeched. "He's a real killer!" and she snapped Narden's collarbone between her frail fingers. The girl in the red hat labored her way past the advertising card's pink face; she pulled on the emergency chain, a whistle blood-stained the air, and the car stopped dead. Doors sprang open silently, alert and courteous as funeral attendants. The guard carried out Narden's unresisting body; the man with the sporting page in his hand wept for his lost glasses.

Soon the car tuned up again, the guard returned, his arms full of fresh wooden frames and cardboard masks furnished free by the company. The passengers, all panting and dishevelled from the recent event, took up their proper places again. The old woman crossed herself piously and snatched the tabloid from the man without his spectacles. Girl in the red hat smoothed her skirt in anticipation of the millionaire who was waiting for her at the end of the subway line in his cushioned limousine. The boy in the checked jacket decided to buy a tropical island when he became the screen's greatest lover next week. The two fat-voiced women unfolded the slip of paper with the number on it that was going to win the sweepstakes. The mother of the little boy dusted off his breeches; he was going to grow up to be President.

MANDAY: A FABLE

EVE MERRIAM

ONCE there was a man who was looking for something.

He said it was a day and it was called Manday.

His wife said You must mean Monday and that is today, so stop rooting through all those bureau drawers and get dressed and go to work.

He said No it is not Monday I mean. It is Manday.

On Tuesday he was in the office and the boss passed by.

Why are you loafing through those ledgers, the boss said. Don't you have anything to do.

Oh yes, I have plenty, the man said. But first I have got to find Manday.

Well today is Tuesday, said the boss, and next Manday,—I mean Monday—you have got me talking that way,—is inventory so hurry up and get back to counting figures.

Wednesday after work he was rushing to catch the express. After he got in he kept staring at the newspaper of the man next to him.

I beg your pardon, he said very politely, but is that Manday's paper.

The other man said Yeah the Dodgers, and got out at the next stop so that was no help.

Thursday it began to rain pitchforks and he went up to the man on the corner who was selling umbrellas. He was very hopeful because he had a feeling Manday would be rainyweather. But the umbrella man only kept trying to see him an umbrella and said, Every Thursday for a month it rains but nobody wants an umbrella. What kind of country nobody buys an umbrella when it rains.

Friday was payday so after six o'clock he went in and had two beers. But the bartender was wiping glasses and ringing up change and when he finally did hear he said, Sure fellah you

tell 'em, and winked at the man who was drinking scotch and standing next to the man.

Saturday he worked half a day and then sat in the park and watched the pigeons. They were not giving out any answers even though they picked at all the peanuts he threw them. And the boys and girls all had on roller skates or else scooters and didn't stop. The nursemaids were all busy talking together and he didn't like to interrupt ladies. So that was that.

He was not fool enough to think it would be Sunday because that was the day they went to his mother-in-law's for dinner and then took her to the picture show.

So when it was Monday morning again he thought, I will have to give it up. There is no Manday. But maybe someday I will just walk in and tell everybody to go to hell anyway.

RAVEL

PAUL GOODMAN

(*For Virginia*)

I

DURING the quick movement, among the snowfall of plucked notes, among the brief phrases; towards the end, when the dancer had developed almost all the steps, or the flying ball gone back and forth *enough* and some one was preparing the kill; the snow-*flurry* blew in the air but the ground was unbroken white,—towards the end of the quick movement of the quartet, the A-string of the viola broke, not a musical sound. At this, all in the audience started. Inserted in every program was the card,

MAURICE RAVEL, 1875-1937
Quartet in F Major

in memoriam

Every soul in the large audience started at the formless tone, the appropriate noise.

And during the slow movement, where there was a pause—when the bows were raised, when the snow smoothly covered the mounds; when the attention crowded into our ears to hear, but there was a pause,—now the 'cello earnestly and alone spoke. In more than one, the blood rushed into tingling ears; and we, perhaps, raised a forearm, palm front, like the witnesses of mysteries in a painting.

From where I am seated in the dark auditorium, I can see above the heads of three of the quartet the lights by which they are reading!

Wonderful! there is a single footstep in the broad expanse of snow.

A flash of inward light exposes the figure of a man in a courtyard, bouncing a ball on the pavement, and catching it.

No, no, let none applaud with noisy handclaps the conclusion of the work, nor let Mrs. Nellie Tate Thomson, the stout blue-gowned patroness of the concerts, rise and take a bow.

Not to end! What a thunderbolt!

There is a momentary pause, arm half in the sleeve of the overcoat.

Again, speak again in the low note.

(The rubber ball is like a live animal, bounding away across the courts.)

Again, speak again in the low note.

You might not think it musicianly, but informal and even entirely contrary to the spirit of good quartet-writing, so to interrupt the civil conversation of the four instruments, their equal dialogue in which none speaks overmuch or too loud, to bring about a *pause*, to make the solo 'cello speak so *earnestly*. But wonderful! There is a flash of inward light—What a thunderbolt! and not to end—

Again, speak again in the low note.

2

In June we played ball-games in honor of the composer of dance-music. The games were tennis, badminton, pelota, hand-ball, and such other games in which on a court limited by straight lines the ball many times flies back and forth before the kill. Over all a large flat area bathed in light, these games took place, the balls flying over nets; but sometimes a wild ball bounded from court to court.

Perhaps in this composer's honor I should describe a tennis-game, game of famous elegance and coeval with the sarabande; and whose rhythm is *One-2-3-4 Two, One-2-3-4 Two: twang* of the racquet, silent flight of the ball, and *hop*. Meantime the players move from side to side.

But I happened to be referee of the doubles-handball game of the juniors.

The black rubber ball was like a live animal. In the hot light the boys were naked to the waist and wore silent shoes. The ball pounded the wooden wall, bounded from the cement, and was slapped by a leather glove, in the rhythm *One* and two and three, *One* and two and three: a waltz. Of these, the wood gave forth the most resounding note.

This game does not have the airy elegance of tennis because there is no silent flight of the ball, but it is more violent and precise.

Meantime the four players moved in opposite directions for the next figure. Teddy Taylor, who had just struck, fell in a step too far, but his partner black William Kelly moved across to cover his court. My lad Remo fell slowly back for the return, while his partner cast his eyes toward the uncovered court and moved across to block.

The grace of the athletes seemed even affected because—until the climax of violence—they had more energy in store than was needed for these limited movements.

Now (to my satisfaction) Remo drove a low beauty thru that left backcourt. (Loud handclaps.) The ball bounded away.

How hateful Victory is in games! puts an end to the rapid figures! What a paradox! they play to play and they play to win, but victory ends the volley.

"Good shot!" I said. "The score is now 16 playing 12."

The ball bounded from court to court.

The handclaps continued and I stopped the play. "Please omit the applause till the end," I said. "When you applaud the players now, you take them as ordinary persons—who can be praised—as if they were acting a part well. But Art is imitation not in the sense of *assuming* a disguise, but of having assumed it and unifying a new life."

The fact is that I was bitter against the intrusion of live feeling, because of the thought of Maurice Ravel.

"These are no longer your friends while the game's on," I said bitterly.

"We're applauding the shot, not the player," said Meyer Leibow.

"Look at the whole at the end," I said.

"Play ball, play ball," said Teddy, who was off balance and in haste.

"The clapping is noisy and confuses the dancers."

"Play ball, play ball."

"Play," I said.

There was the thunder of the wood wall, the kiss of cement, and the leather slap. At first, as the point warms up, the stiffer movements of the players develop discrete figures, one to each triplet, but always faster, till at last there is a continuous flow of speed, violence, and precision, in great variety: the powerful soul pent in the form of the game. Now the lads have given themselves to it! a devoted offering, to the sacred dance. No *longer* our poor friends, when the game's on.

And so everywhere on the broad area, brief cries and bursts of light.

These games are in memory (I am describing them in memory) of the composer of *La Valse*, of the *Alborada del Grazioso*, of the memorial dances called *Tombeau de Couperin*.

Hateful Victory! for Remo hit a "killer," the perfect shot which strikes with a flat noise (as a string of a musical instrument might break) so low on the wall that there is no rebound. This shot was greeted with a volley of handclaps. The ball was like a lively animal: developing a bounce, it went bounding off the court, out of all restraint.

There was a pause. I tossed in a new ball.

"Play," I said.

And now could be observed something *human*, one of those mechanisms of human strategy that preserve us all from *excessive* sorrow. Teddy was off his balance; he couldn't collect himself. Remo and George, scenting the Victory, at once began to pound away at *him*; he fell to pieces and at last he missed completely. The tears flooded his eyes and he felt bad, especially

because he was letting his partner down. He couldn't collect himself.

"The score is 18 playing 12," I said.

"I'm losing the game," said Teddy bitterly, unable to throw himself into the swing of the game, "I oughta quit."

"No, no, play—play," I said.

"I stink," said Teddy.

But now could be observed something *human*, for black William, just in order that his partner might recover his nerve (I saw it well), *purposely* looked terrible on the next two points! the first he missed completely and the second he fell on his face. "Between the ones *I* blow an' the ones *you* blow," he said from the floor, "we're doin' good."

Here could be observed something *human*, one of those mechanisms of human strategy.

"20!" I said. "Point is game."

There was a pause.

"Listen," I whispered to my boy Remo, "don't ever put an end to this game. Even let *them* win if it's necessary."

"Play," I said.

3

Midst of the uncircling, about to dance one round I thought—of Maurice Ravel just dead. Didn't stop, but while the phonograph played, danced the *Pavane for an Infanta Dead*, danced it while strings and woodwinds played, danced until a deathless joy possessed us both, my motion and his play.

Us fellows of the Holy Ghost the Angel cannot overcast entirely, but we live on thru each other, heart and song.

4

Why fool ourselves? The last year before his death the composer of *Daphnis and Chloe* spent shut up in a lunatic asylum. Was not this thought a dark back drop for the games? The last

year before his death the composer of *Daphnis and Chloe* spent shut up in a lunatic asylum. It is hard, hard to surrender the soul to these formal dances, to these formal dances without a pause. The last year before his death the composer of *Daphnis and Chloe* spent shut up in a lunatic asylum. What a sentence to write about a musician! If there's no harmony in harmony, *where* is it to be found? Why fool ourselves? The last year before his death the composer of *Daphnis and Chloe* spent shut up in a lunatic asylum.

The works of the last years of this composer were very simple. How simple! to repeat with the *minutest* variations one figure again and again. Not to end! But why fool ourselves? The last year before his death the composer of *Daphnis and Chloe* spent shut up in a lunatic asylum. Not to end! it was necessary not to lapse into the maddening applause, but to persist, shut up, in a form one was at least sure of. This one figure, evolved by what a thunderbolt of creative effort, sure of, he repeated, with the *minutest* variation; afraid to deviate from this sure figure—lest suddenly it vanish, because a tune's forgotten instantly at the least distraction. Why fool ourselves? The last years before his death the composer of *Daphnis and Chloe* spent shut up in a lunatic asylum. What a sentence to write about a musician!

Paralyzed by a thunderbolt, of the creative spirit, amid the ordinary life: there was a pause (arm half in the sleeve of his overcoat). Shine on! speak again in the low note! How to persist in this storm-moment? and not to end or lapse into the amusing distractions (of conversations of people in the lobby); *it was necessary most of all to make the formal figure self contained*, very complete, with no clue leading outside itself. Then what a paradox, for if complete it must *end*. The years before his death, the composer of *Daphnis and Chloe* spent shut up in an asylum. I should never say it about him if he weren't a musician.

The works of this composer were very simple,—to repeat with the *minutest* variation the formal figure, not to deviate too far from this sure thing, a tune's forgotten instantly at the least dis-

traction. Yet not to end! What a paradox! There was a pause. No, no, please let there be no loud handclapping now when the composer is so ill at ease; let not the wicked patroness of the concert rise in her blue dress to take a bow. But speak again in the low note.

"Creator Spirit, come!" so have many composers said. (It is a hymn in all the hymnals.) What a thunderbolt! There was a pause,—I had my arm half in my sleeve. No, no! But how am I to persist in this storm-moment and never lapse into the amusing distractions of the conversations in the lobby? Not to end! The years the composers have spent shut up in an asylum! Why fool myself? The years the composers have spent shut up in a lunatic asylum!

God forbid! Let me speak no harm of the Creator Spirit;—but may He come.

Now can be observed something *human*, one of those mechanisms of human strategy that preserve us all from *excessive* sorrow. For here was the desperate poet frightened of the terrible pause; and there (as he suddenly saw in a dream) was Ravel on a sultry day during the last year before his death: he was in a broad square court of the asylum, alone; and he was playing a solitary ball-game, without outcries, bouncing a rubber ball on the ground and catching it. It was the composer of the *Sonatine*. So my eyes flooded with tears of memory and I could not put on my coat. But the thought came to me (thanks be to God, not without tears also of release),—the thought to think of my poor brother Maurice Ravel now,—if indeed I must exist yet awhile in this way,—and make a small trophy, as you see. Not in his honour—no no!—but mainly for my own sake.—A description of a game.

It was the composer of the *Sonatine*! I think we can, with our thoughts on that *dead* man, come to the last word. *He* won't write any new works now; we know *his* style. How sharply, among the brief outcries, broke the string! There was a pause.

ON THE ROCKS ALONG THE RIVER

PAUL GOODMAN

THE air and airs and winds of March were such, more by nipping threats than actual bites, that one felt he was withdrawing from them into himself—especially one who was ahead of the seasons and wore a sweater in March and would wear a shirt in April; but even the overcoated remained on the *qui vive* in their woolen cylinders. No one felt, what was nevertheless the case, how the atmosphere was supporting him all around and rushing in and out of him. But on the 1st and 2nd of April! days unusually warm and brilliant, people suddenly had the sentiment that the atmosphere was supporting them, caressing and almost crowding them, with high pressure both outside and in. The little breezes that blow up the legs were allowed to be noticed and the hair was given to the south wind. People even glanced upward at the swift clouds.

When Mynheer and his five small disciples, whom he was introducing to the structure of the environment (and this was all their education), descended the rocks along the river where fishermen were fishing and hardy boys were already swimming, he noticed, was amazed by, the busy continuum of the air evident close and far. Noticed the tiny and vast motions themselves and the fact that together they crowded all the space there was! A steady airy motion was arriving from the south; but up above, it was evident, a strong east wind was gathering the clouds in mountains. Wisps at the edges of the storm-bank were still dissolving apparently into nothing; yet it was clear how whirlpools of vapor were saturating the darkening blue. In the middle air, gulls and crows were standing motionless—as it seemed! Fearfully accelerating (as a falling body does) the smoke of a pipe sped round up its still spiral and vanished. The surface of the river was everywhere giving itself to the air. Most of the bright

splashes fell back into the river in drops, but the tiniest sparkles passed into the atomies of the air. A dead fish on the rock: the stinking gases were powerfully agitating the little air; and the wings of small fleas (the first of the year) were wildly fanning these gases.

These were the Vortices of the gases. The noble Dutchman pointed them out to the five. They became conscious that they themselves were breathing in and out and were shaking the density with speech.

Now among these gases, it could be seen also that the persons—including Mynheer and the boys, and the fishermen, and the lady and gentlemen spectators on the rocks, among whom was Mr. Impetigo (and the Governor of the State walking in obscurity from the other end of the path)—all these were *Flexible Tubes*. They were tubes sucking in not only the atmosphere of the environment but nourishment of all kinds and furnishing a thru passage for it. For except in matters of perception it was especially in these interior passages that these tubes came into contact with the environment which was supporting their vitality and growth. The dense atmosphere caressed the tubes around, and also penetrated them thru and thru; but not, in the interiors, according to the "freedom of the winds," but the atmosphere was accepted and released according to the tubular rhythms of each kind, so that among the rocks and sitting on the rocks the tubes were bringing far-off environment, as well as being immersed in and out in river vapors.

Meantime the Hudson River was everywhere vibrating in green V's and blue W's, and was brightly ripped in rows of X's. It licked the rocks in green Lambdas which were then elongated into white-dotted I's. The south air was everywhere writing on the river the words VIX VIX and IWI.

When Mynheer the pedagogue—led to the idea by the change in the weather and by the perception of the little and vast vortices—saw suddenly that the people, and even he himself, were great tubes, he was so taken aback that he didn't dare communicate the

thought to the five. This thought seemed to him to make maxims unedifying and to take the heart out of his desires, and in general to cast aspersions on the educational behavior. But he excused his silence by saying to himself that these tubes were not perceptions at all but were merely interpretations, and the boys could make their own interpretations. Yet the tubes *were* perceptions, for there, lolling on the jagged rock, was the great tube Mr. Impetigo, topped with a Panama hat.

This hat was soaring and settling in the breezes and about to take flight.

For now the south air, struggling with the eastern storm, was steady no longer, but came in gentle gusts, making the whole fabric of space tremulous. Now caught in the contrary currents, a sheet of newspaper rose up a yard on one wind, then turned over into the sunlight and soared a yard on the other wind, and so, veering from blue to white and soaring from north to west, the *Herald Tribune* rose up, smaller and smaller to the view, and became invisible in the empyrean. And in fair exchange, a cold pour from above trickled down and made a naked swimmer tremble. Everywhere the smokes of the pipes were sucked upward faster round their spirals; and the midges fanning the little air rose on the great air.

The Panama hat stood on its rim and Mr. Impetigo raised his left hand—

This great tube on the rock, Mr. Impetigo, was an eccentric. Last week when he had a gas-bill to dispute with the Utilities Company, he refused to deal with any subordinate officials but went over their heads to the president of the board, "where policy is made." And when he had to buy a pair of scissors, he bought a dozen gross, in order to take advantage of the jobber's price; in this way he always had many commodities lying around. In general, Mr. Impetigo understood that every transaction was part of the Imperial economy and he tried to move according to the great principles agitating the whole.

—Suddenly the hat was sailing on the water.

"The hat! the hat!" he cried in the gusts, writhing like the fixed hydra and initiating torn streamers of vibration that in one place among the rocks sounded like "Bhagadvat" and in another "Paraloo."

If I may paraphrase the poem, substituting for drowned Sappho the Panama hat:

The ripples moved in longs and shorts above it,
against the crown they broke in many shorts;

and already the straw hat was offshore twenty yards and on its way to the Isles.

But in this emergency, a skilful fisherman whipped his supple rod; the leaded line snaked to the mark. The hook bit; and the Panama hat was raised dripping aloft—while every one along the shore burst into rounds of spontaneous applause, all except that tragic Governor who, moving in solitude of soul and with eyes downcast, never even saw the beautiful spectacle.

They excitedly exchanged vowels in the wind from rock to rock.

And by that unerring fishline in the hands of an expert, Mynheer was moved to the reflection that it did not matter, it was just as well or even somewhat better, that they were all flexible tubes. *This* could not destroy the meaning of maxims nor take the heart out of his desires nor cast aspersions on the educational activity. Indeed he saw with *pleasure* that his five were pretty pink or golden small tubes.

He called them together to report on their observations (and he was in no mood to be critical).

And first, Nosey Parker, the little tube who had the flaring nostrils, said: "There's a damp smell and it's sure gonna rain."

The pedagogue patted the naïve boy on the head.

Big-eared Timmy had gone further afield. "The Sirens," he said, "the Sirens promise to tell you something, but they sing only the vowels, A, E, I, O, and U."

"There are only three sirens," said Mynheer, "and they sing Aaah, Eeeee, Oooh, Augie?"

Augie, concerning whom the others used to joke that he was all eyes, said merely, "It's gettin' dark, let's go home."

But the fourth, a muscular and lascivious little athlete, cried out: "Them dead fish gi' me the chills. The wind seeps right thru their open mouth without even a taste."

There is a poem called *Sirens*, which begins:

Piercing sweet a trio thrilling
at twilight woo the sailors more than willing
and on they come with rowing pressed
while Vesper blazes in the west.

It goes on to say:

Half on a rock, half in the brine
a sailor's body lies; the fishes are
eating his ankles 'neath the water-line,
shaking the reflex of the Evening Star.

The last of the boys, named Thumbs, said: "I was skimmin' rocks. I make 'em jump seven times!"

Mynheer said: "School is almost over for today; but on the way back I want you to notice how every one is a big tube with the environment slowly passing thru, in one end and out the other."

As if by one impulse, the five stood on the marble ledge and peed in five golden arcs into the sea. A little girl nearby, seeing this for the first time, recreated the famous joke and said: "How practical it is!" or in another version: "What a handy thing to take along on a hike!"

But now it was surely going to storm. The bruised sky was black and blue; and it seemed as if the motion had altogether left the air. I say "seemed" because the vortices were not really

dissipated but as if congealed. I say "as if" because they had really collected a terrible potential, like the clenched teeth of death-agony

—half-way between a wince and a bite, really vibrating at a fearful frequency, too fast to be visible.

The *Herald Tribune*, rain-soaked in heaven, fell on the water with a loud slap.

It was almost quiet. The screaming little girls vanished. Oppressed now by the atmosphere which so lightly used to fill and support them, but which now, the barometer dancing every millimeter, seemed about to *burst* them, the great tubes straggled heavily away from the rocks, the swimmers clutching their clothes and the pedagogue leading away his five senses. Mr. Impetigo put on his already streaming hat. All were heavily straggling away, except for Governor Marengo who was slowly advancing his regardless eyes downcast.

On the flat slate water, in mile-long staffs, immediate bends, and half-mile whorls, the air, alive and startled for an inch above the water but elsewhere congealed, was writing *freely*, like a Chinese poet who in the moment of *release* from the obligation of ideographs (it is the moment of the poetic climax just after the dramatic climax, and he expresses only feelings, the feelings unsettled by the reverse of fortune), draws the great loop and flies back across it, and ends in the jagged lightning and a puncture that leaves a crest of foam.

Nevertheless—amid this compressed air, threatening to burst asunder every large and small tube—along the tangible rocks and the stiff water—here came something Empty: a twilit cloud full of whispers. This alienated region *no longer partook of the nourishment* and was *immune to the pressure*. It was *no longer in the same flow of time*, which I indicate by writing of it in the present-tense.

It is the Governor of the State who, having committed his crime, is in soul-solitude.

His crime closes him in a cloud and protects him like that

cloud of invisibility which the Venus shed round her son in the maritime city of Carthage. (For divine love too encloses in a cloud.) Against this preternatural cloud which is walking, the vortices did not even break. Within, the light is dim and there is a whispered conversation.

In absolute silence the rain began to fall and to patter the water.

Alas this criminal! except for these intimate whispers can hear no other voices, which all communicate by shaking the ambient air. To his surprise he finds that he cannot communicate with his dear love, his fiancée, altho it used to seem that they had an affinity for each other's good or evil. (This was a terrible potential across which they spoke in gusts.) Now he has done the deed demanded—but without regrets, for doesn't he have preternatural powers? but none but these.

In absolute silence the rain began to fall and to patter the water. This storm did not break but spread into quiet noise as the sky briefly brightened at sunset.

As he was walking along with eyes on the ground, Governor Marengo noticed the remnants and the relics of the tubular beings.

The characteristic death of tubes is to be either scotched or sectioned. On a flat rock a fisherman had left scotched fragments and sections of sandworms. A section on a rusty hook. A scotched fragment, stuck fast by its liquid, was still (till sunset, says the legend) undulating his feathery feet. Another section was crawling blindly.

A drooling rubber, that had temporarily isolated a virile tube, lay on a rock. Another was drifting in the water.

It is almost another world, rather than another aspect of the world, that we see if we keep our eyes fixed on the ground. The large tubes especially loom perpendicularly when alive and using their implements; cigarettes, gloves, and tackle are employed aloft from the ground. The discarded relics on the flat—

bits of silver-paper and paper-clips, and strings—re-enter a non-utilitarian existence.

It is the kingdom of the dead. By a small aberration of perception (given the wrong mood), one could see not only relics but remnants—I mean the lifeless penis, the torn-off mouth, re-entering a non-utilitarian existence. (Such things exist on battlefields.)

—As they emerged in the town, Mynheer told his boys to fix their eyes on the street polka-dotted with raindrops and see the orange-peels, etc. In this way Augie, with a cry of joy, found a 50c piece.—

Meantime Nurse Mulqueen, the Governor's fiancée, was running swiftly after him along the rocks, afire with love like one whose clothes are in flames.

One of the intimate conversationalists in the preternatural cloud is telling a story: "In my early boyhood," he says, "I was afraid that some one would come in when I was masturbating. I held my attention divided, fixed half on the pleasant thrills, but half, and this was the wilder feeling, on the threatened click of the latch, like a sleeping mother listening always for the cry. Later, when I was a criminal, it was already second-nature for me to have an apprehensive heart, and it would have been easy for me to dissociate my soul. Indeed at *any* time, no matter what I was doing, my heart was set to pounding at the click of the latch; I know there was lust in this anxiety. But now at last the calamity has occurred. The doorbell rang; it was no sneaking surprise, you see. I opened the door wide and *Nobody* came in past me—I mean, an empty space charged with Mana."

If I were a sculptor, I should walk along these great rocks and—sneaking up with iron control of my perception to keep it from correcting itself—I'd fix forever in isolation that posture of the rock that made me think it was a person. And if the shore were strewn with these statues! there would be a museum of *my* nightmares like that fixed for the nightmares of all mankind on the hillside of Easter Island.

The Nurse's naïve, most naïve, plan was to overtake her slow fleeing love and to *rejoin* him, on the grounds that she too had done a deed demanded and was as criminal as he.

It was not the same crime that she had committed, for each one has his or her own crime. (Probably more than one, though at the given moment it seems that there is only one, so that in order to conceal this one we freely hint that we are guilty of enormities, and do not realize that our friends are stunned by the admissions.)

The Witch was flying along, not in a preternatural empty space, but more like a raging furnace devouring the vortices and space with no residue, as if she were rolling up the world and leaving nothing behind.

But! you might object, crimes committed in such pure love and with the object of bringing to the Governor a kind of peace are no crimes at all, or at least it is not such that can uncreate the air and rocks. This also was partly true. And where she trod the April flowers briefly bloomed—not thickly, but in isolated spots, blue-bells and violets moist with light rain. These little flowers were a *surprise* among the carvings. There was one blue bell or one violet at the base of each figure of nightmare. At its exhalation of odor stirred the little air.

These figures of nightmare were gigantic, the heads of giants and giants.

A second intimate conversationalist in the preternatural cloud is saying or rather crooning: "O little Tony, why do you wake up crying in the middle of the night and there's nothing we can do to comfort you? O little Tony! O little Tony, why do you wake up in the middle of the night? O little Tony, why do you wake up crying in the middle of the night and there's nothing we can do to comfort you?"

She is crooning: "Yes, little Tony, it's all right. Yes, little Tony, Yes, little Tony, it's all right in the middle of the night. O little Tony, why do you wake up crying in the middle of the night? Yes, little Tony, it's all right."

EPISODES IN A LONG LIFE: REplete WITH ADVENTURES: SINGAPORE

H. J. KAPLAN

I

SINGAPORE was agony, but it is not one of the things I try to forget. I remember it carefully, with anxiety, and at last with ironic triumph, as a dancer slowly works out a pattern to contain all the theme of his defeat. O, yes! And when it is all called up I begin to prick out meanings, think of myself as the Young God arising in the Springtime, as Perceval or Pilgrim or any Seeker. In short, I behave like the merest jongleur who has been drunk, grateful for whatever clear lines rise out of the mist. . . . Now this is precisely what happened before I left, although none of the meanings seemed acceptable then. The Luftmensch in my personality seeped out and created a scandal! I discovered that I had two lives, one nourished upon a certain inner concentration which the other could no longer suppress, and which was beginning to intrude—as subtly and persistently as it sometimes escapes me now.

I was trying to write a statement of resignation from the Party. But the more I probed into the Party, the more its increasingly multiple wrongness seemed secondary, and the more I found myself writing of my politically irrelevant or oblique self, recalling the patterns of my childhood and my spiritual comedies: how I had set out to control the world, evolving strategy through long afternoons in an enormous armchair, picking my nose; then discovered that (from a viewpoint I at once accepted as superior) I was only picking my nose . . . And curiously enough I found myself defending those hours in the armchair, as though secretly I wished to justify the present act of remembering them.

I was an animistic kid (I wrote) but after all I had nightmares too, and I made a point of examining them in the morning, coldly, until the terror was gone.

After a while I raised my head and thought of Myra, or saw the heading, all festooned with aimless pencillings: The Party and the War! Then I cursed myself for time not simply lost but *perverted*, took a clean sheet of paper, wrote another heading. I sharpened a pencil, walked around the room "to clear my mind a bit," and at last dropped down on the carpet, my head on the divan, beginning to mull over that romantic time when my family lost all its money and died, when we developed our splendid, unconscious *belief in belief*, our intolerance of tragedy—and all our most intimate sins! I went to the desk and scribbled away happily until once again I caught sight of the heading. The Party and the War! We used to say, 'the program is everything.' Now suddenly it seemed distant, unreal, less a *thing* than my fear, which all at once I remembered.

My fear was involved in my sense of reality. In those days I saw myself as *he*, John; watched him struggle like a fly in the thickening mess of my life. Even while aware of the cowardice and danger of this detachment I savoured the incomplete relief it gave, folded blankets about me, dreamed of mastery and flight, and forgot the terrible dreams. But just as I awoke from the pastoral reveries with a sense of shame and pollution, I could not help wondering, fearfully: how much of what I am living is real? And even after I got back I felt the question—it was all so difficult to remember; and I knew very well that my friends did not believe me. "If you persist in saying it *happened*," said Fiedler, "then you are mad, and off you go to Bedlam. If you call it a dream—then it is marvelous, a fugue on roller skates!" I decided to let it go at that, relieved after all that Fiedler stood there before me, that I understood what he said. For just as there was some doubt, even in my own mind, about the reality of Singapore, I had once come to doubt (and precisely in the same way) the reality of Fiedler and Kaplan.

Now don't mistake me, I was not mad. As obsessed as I was with the world-tumbling-down-about-my-ears, I never forgot that there was an actual Fiedler, teaching English and writing my favorite poetry, an actual Kaplan, pedantic and sentimental, an actual Myra, theatrical and stupid, etc. But at the same time I came to see them as though they were also, in a strange way, functions of me, created by some sick desire of my mind to cast out its confusions. So that towards the end I would come home from an evening of conversation, remembering the incredible unconnectedness of all we had said to each other, and begin to wonder whether I had really been with them. Then indeed I would grow cold with terror at the thought that I was losing my mind, call up Kaplan in the middle of the night to ask him if he had seen anything of my scarf, wait while the sweat chilled on my body until something he said assured me that he had really been there. Now "really" is irrelevant: in the same sense that Kaplan and the others were with me, I went to Singapore, suffered, and came back.

Myra, although I did not know it, was acting as a member of the Personal Relations Committee of the Party. She had thrown herself at me, with a kind of exasperation, several times in the past; but I had never been able to stand her: all empty noisiness, sloppy, slightly cracked, perpetually aspiring in cheap rhetoric. She made a great point of her promiscuity, alternately hysterical and very blasé; in brief (for she is only incidental) the type frigid nymph, always smoking and smouldering, like dry ice. Yet I responded to her, gratefully, just as I astounded myself at that time by dreaming of stray waitresses and a riotous harem of women I had scarcely noticed . . . The Germans were in the Low Lands. Paris was about to fall. Everything we had predicted came true—except our own attitude. I had no attitude. Meanwhile, breaking with the Party was like a protracted amputation; to stay in would have meant a nightmare of frenetic activity, directed by beliefs I no longer held; to leave was like the final destruction of a self I had built minutely, during many years.

They actually began to make love in all that. But the instant it became clear that John was definitely leaving, Myra trotted out principles which forbade her to sleep with a petty bourgeois; and he, who had been tepid and distraught, almost persuaded himself to stay in the Party simply in order to sleep with Myra. It was like the temptation of a new, filthier kind of sin! . . . Even now I recall how all those last days took on their strangeness. I see him arise from bed in a lingering daze, listening to the newscasts as he eats his breakfast. He listens carefully, but with as-if emotions only, so that he thinks, for example: *a war is going on*. What are your reactions? moral? psychological? political? Answer in brief clear sentences. Is it true that you want side A to win? And all he would get was something like this: "when, after hanging interminably on Myra's eyelid, reflecting in its facets the rose at the end of the garden, the tear rolls over and drops,—there will be an explosion and the cathedral will blow apart" . . . Then he would dress, taking absurdly long, and race about the city after Myra, harrying her at work, making her lunch with him (although he detested watching her eat), and always arguing, arguing, on such a low level and so loudly and with such a sense of her offensiveness and stupidity that he would come away broken and sick, as if he had spent a week with a nymphomaniac. Then, in the evening, when Myra was unfindable, he sought out Fiedler and Kaplan, these two particularly, for he took a fearful joy in the long conversations which made him suspect that he was going mad. (Mad, in any case, he sometimes told himself, to spend evening after evening on nothing but talk. What can it matter, even to them, that Kaplan be a positivist and Fiedler a thomist?) It was not only the conversations, of course. There was a kind of emotional anesthesia which he observed in himself even as he wrangled with Myra; there were his nightmares he no longer dared remember; there was the increasing subtlety of his mind in devising stratagems in order to avoid, first the problems that obsessed him, and then even small things, like hanging up his trousers at night. But the conversa-

tions had the advantage of forcing him to remain face to face with this threatening thing, the lack of connection; although he could not decide whether it was he or they who affirmed and denied the same propositions, used words which shifted reference without warning, in short spoke gibberish. For though it seemed to him that they disagreed on almost every point, they kept interrupting each other with expressions like "the point is well taken, I would simply add," or "exactly, and don't you think—?" etc. Only recently John had been no more intimate with them than with the jongleur, his submerged self; for all his life had been ordered—and in large part was still ordered—on the basis of his old beliefs. ("I detest," he used to say, "the witless and flabby tolerance that distinguishes between opinions and the person who holds them.") But now he sat with them night after night, fascinated, asking questions to get them started, listening with incredulity and fear and a deep desire to go away, go to sleep, give it all up. Until, as Kaplan began with "Yes, of course, I would only add . . ." John would break out with a deep groan. "Speak to me! Why do you say *of course* if you are going to deny what he has said? Is it that you are always talking about something else? Speak to each other, I beg of you! Speak to me!" And though he spoke vehemently, almost desperately, he felt utterly cold and was not surprised when they laughed, taking it as a familiar joke; Kaplan quoting mechanically,

Why do you never speak. Speak.
 What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?
 I never know what you are thinking. Think!

And Fiedler quoting himself. "Exactly! I've always said that in fifty years not one soul will understand another. Modern Education!" And after a while John would go home, turning over and over everything they had said, beginning to torture himself with wondering: had they really been there?

He never wrote his statement. For two weeks he scribbled incoherently, wallowing about in all the pus of disappointment, rancor; and in his uncalled-for memories. In the end, though he conceived endless affirmations of this and denunciations of that, he lost even the sense of the importance of the statement and found that instead of leaving he had simply oozed out, like the last meeting with Myra. She who had often annoyed him, in the old days, by threatening to come live with him and his "little T-square, ha, ha," now drew herself up like an undernourished and pimpled Roman matron, and accused him of having ravished her purity under false pretences. (Not that—to *him*—there was anything comic in her fanatic starved eyes; nor even something quite unknown to his own experience in her tilted quality, the passionless excitement, always off-keel) O, no! She wouldn't come live with him now! She would rather sleep with the most battered and filthy wreck of a party-member. "Sex"—she actually said this—"is on one hand a simple physiological relief, on the other a kind of admiration." And in the intoned liturgical style of Party epistles, the voice clanging up on *one* and *other*, and dropping way down, like a fat dignitary rolling down a grass slope, on *relief* and *admiration*. And since there was nothing she admired less than a "vacillating petty bourgeois who stands on the worker's shoulders only to hoist himself up to the bourgeoisie," not only would she not sleep with him—but henceforth know that she would not even speak to him. And that was that.

"Look," he said, and bent over her. But he was immediately overwhelmed with an odd feeling of incredulity and weakness, so that neither the disgust he wanted to spit out nor the shameful plea that came to his lips, were strong enough to shape an expression on his pale features. And after a moment there was a physical illness (but curiously distant!) and he turned, walking away, coldly aware of the fact that she was retaining a squeal of triumph, preparing to tell her friends how she had "stopped him in his tracks *that* time, all right."

So. He nodded his slow ashamed farewell to eloquent mastery and with sorrow to the ironic light that probed every corner, as if there were no shadows, no terror, nothing so formless and painful as his life. Sitting up in bed, he said to himself: granted, I dream. But this is different, the one I can't bear to remember. He held himself there as the shadows slipped into their places; and the infantile terror, his oldest and most painful thing; even while the awareness slipped knifelike into him that there was a thief in the room. My last chance, he repeated; perhaps aloud, for the heavy figure at the window paused and looked up; short, brutal, his face malevolent and peaceful.

"Just stay where you are and keep your mouth shut."

As in a dream, John watched him move across the room to the divan. There he picked up the trousers, emptying the pockets, and John had a sudden vision of the incipient break-up of his mind, fingers clinging with agony to a ledge, nothing below. Hurriedly he called up words, faces, kept them spinning around the nearest association . . . From the divan the man moved noiselessly to the desk, where he carefully displaced the T-square and drawing-board and rummaged through the drawers. This fellow, John thought, doesn't even do me the honor of watching me. If I were to leap out of bed? shout for help? He shuddered. Impossible—who is there to help me? If I move he will strangle me and everything will be left hanging, like my body on the bed . . . In the shadows and inadmissible velleities of this thought he almost forgot the intruder, but not his unbearable terror; and suddenly the man was backing out of the window, his face illumined and projected like an electric bulb through greyblack gauze. John recognized him instantly, although he did not know the individual; as, in the old days, although he felt no deep sympathy with any one of his comrades, the face of any one could always focus all the common hopes and purpose, their suspicion and what they expected of him. Somewhat reassured, he swung his feet out of bed, saying contemptuously:

"Have you got everything?"

The face dropped away. For a moment John could not bring himself to go to the window; stood thinking absurdly: the thieves! the thieves! and I gave them so much! so willingly! Then, recalling certain old letters and papers, the crumpled trousers and disordered desk, he bent his body suddenly (as if he had a knife in his groin) saying: *this is the one I must remember*. At last he walked to the window, trying to think what to do! The moon had disappeared; he could see nothing . . . Now the click-click of high heels on the pavement reminded him that he was naked and unbeautiful; and he was compelled to go to the divan, put on his trousers; he found a shirt as well, rejected it for a more attractive one, groped about absentmindedly for his shoes, without finding them. When he came back he realized that the sound he had heard and his coquetry in dressing had been a diversion, created by his subtle and cowardly mind; and he made a great effort to call it all up again . . . But again words whirled through his mind like a flying chain on a windlass. *O, Mort, vieux capitaine, il est temps, levons l'ancre!* He stood there so long that he began to muse; then he shook himself and searched his pockets. Everything was gone: the wallet with his keys and old photographs, licenses, letters, memos, even the small change purse; so that the trousers, and he in them, seemed to have lost their peculiar aspect and odor. Carefully, he buoyed himself on irony: "The victim's false teeth were missing, and every possible clue had been removed from the body." But the words whirled off. It was difficult. The desk drawers gaped open, empty.

John found his shoes and a pair of socks, sat on the divan to put them on. Standing again, he surprised in himself not anger but a bewilderment, a desire to go back to bed and let it all ride until morning, dream another dream. At the door he turned, gazing with shame and deep sorrow at the undisturbed bed: the warmth and simplicity of it speaking to him, saying *It's all unreal, a trivial dream, an unsolvable problem. . . .* Ah, but I can't

stay here, he thought. There's no money, and I won't waste my psychic energy yearning for tobacco and clean sheets. For a moment he pondered and then, with an agonized wrench of purpose, he turned and left the room, left the house, walked miles away before he let himself stop.

He who had been an architect became a sailor. Sweat and physical indignity dried on his indifferent body like spray on the decks. He arrived, one splendid, immobile morning, in Singapore.

Jumping ship was easier than he thought it would be; the whole feeling and ease of it was contained in that leaping phrase, *jumping ship*, which he spoke and saw as he wandered about in the Chinese quarter, examining the narrow streets and serious faces with alternate absorption and disbelief, as if he were at a cinema. He was determined to find what he could only think of, vaguely, as "the real thing," but the intrusion of the foreign made all purpose seem distant and all immediacy delightful and revealing, so that once he began to wonder if he had not given it up after all, if this were not simply a happy dream. Then he stopped in the midst of a crowd and, with pain, remembered the menacing face of the thief, the papers scattered on the floor, his pockets empty . . .

Raising his head, John saw the man. He recognized him instantly from the descriptions he had heard again and again during the trip. A white man, tall, boney, ragged, with a consumptive querulousness which vanished incompletely from his face so that over it might come the sign, an assembled leer. They spoke, and John followed him, feeling an absurd need to justify himself, not with frankness and logic, but with the wiseguy insouciance one affects with pimps. But the nearest thing to ribaldry he could think of was a sentence which, once remembered, kept running through his mind: *anyone can use any idea, and there are no ideas which compel those who use them to be faithful to them*. Silently, then, he followed the man into an alley where, about twenty yards from the street, they came upon a

black iron door. The man unlocked it and led the way into a vast room, like a theatre-stage, lying bare between a towering wall on the right and, on the left, a black, smoky, indefinite expanse where wind seemed to stir but no light. And there, at the other end, was the girl on roller skates, marvelous, obscene.

She skated noiselessly to them, whirled about and away again, stood at last, beckoning, not twenty feet from the door. Her smile was whorish and her thighs full, the hair subtly visible; when he saw that there were really shadows, sloping to the sex, his desire was instantaneous and he struck his forehead with his fist, crying, "It's true, it's true!"

"Just a minute," said the man, pointing to a small red scooter. "You've got to catch 'er."

"Catch her!"

"Be a sport. She don't want your money. Ever since she was a kid blokes give 'er money. Now she wants someone to catch 'er."

"O, I'll catch her all right!" said John, and turned to her as the man let himself out through the great black door. Poor kid! he thought, in a kind of delighted pity. She is nothing but herself. One woman, on roller skates! Who can deny this most violent dream? the physical ugliness of it, buttons, sweat, the faces contorted at the end? And then it is really the end—no infinite series of impossible consequences, as in politics or metaphysics, or one's stupid life,—*there is nothing so final and single but death, but death, but death* . . . He let the thought go off into the vast silence and watched her; the whole thing froze into a "scene," the girl, his desire and hope; he with one foot on the scooter, she poised for laughing retreat, expectant, perhaps even disconcerted, for he did not come; the muscles of her face beginning almost imperceptibly to work with entreaty: come.

"O adorable!" he whispered, and moved one step toward her, watching her legs grow tense as she stood on her toes, throwing one arm up for balance, pointing away. There was a clap of music as the wheel of his scooter turned, billowing intolerably along the invisible ceiling, rolling with an immense, gathering

plenitude until it was everywhere; until the wheel rested and the music suddenly vanished. So that at first, as in a dream, he thought that unfulfilled sublimity surely a function of the turning wheel and he too grew more tense, lest he move accidentally or awkwardly, and break the continuity of a chord. But then he recalled where he was, and he said sharply, "What was that? Speak to me! Where did it come from? What the devil are you trying to put over?" She did not answer. He turned in every direction seeking the source of the music, deciding at last that it came from beyond the black curtain; they were backstage, doubtless, and beyond the curtain, somewhere out there, a performance was going on. When he turned again he was overwhelmed by the sight of her, a choreographic elaboration of controlled, impatient waiting, suave hips and lips trembling, the full breasts about to burst into flower. Exultant, he wanted to prolong this moment, sing it,

"We'll rent a little place
 With a mirror and a bed,
 And I'll gaze upon your face
 —And that darling little place!—
 Until we are . . . dead!"

She laughed, whispering, "Come, catch me, baby," and it seemed to John that there was nothing so simple. "Not for philosophy does this rose give a damn," he sang out, and drove himself toward her on the scooter with three long strokes; she with three perfectly timed strokes skated back, away from his fingers, while the vast room opened and filled to three immeasurable chords. Gathering speed, they whirled around a lowbuilt couch and back, more and more swiftly, and once, suddenly aware that he could not stop, he was frightened, bewildered by that mad pervasive music, almost ill. But at that instant he reached across the couch and caught her hand, leaped from his flying scooter which shot from under him across the floor. Holding her fingers he

swung her around him gaily, until he could seize her waist and force her to the couch. Dazed, awkward, yet with an ineffable sense of mastery, he forced her back, his lips on her face, his knee parting her thighs. Until, fumbling, he tore his clothes.

Then he leaped back at the great roar of laughter behind him.

He turned. The expanse of darkness was gone. There, on every side, sat rows and rows of laughing men, Chinese, Negroes, Whites, even a few uniforms, endless moving rows—as though everything he had ever forgotten or left behind was laughing there. But for a moment it meant nothing, he simply *saw* the four-piece orchestra under the stage, the yellow lights smoke-wreathed; and the contorted faces. Then he looked down at his suddenly shriveled sex and torn trousers, and the knife turned in his groin, so cruelly that he cried out, striking his face with his fist, *This is the bitter one!* The lights went out again and there was a great noise of chairs pushed back, a babble of voices.

When they were all gone he walked to the great black door, thinking: this is the one I must remember. There, fearfully shadowed against the wall, the girl stood; the whorish look gone from her face. "Now," she said. "Please." As though afraid that he would kill her. "No," he said, smiling to reassure her, "I'm impotent now." "Impotent?" He was exhausted, but he laughed at the wry concern on her little face. "It's all right," he said. "I've been like that before. Perhaps I'll arise in the springtime." That made her laugh, and he tousled her hair playfully as he passed through the door. He walked down the alley, gingerly feeling over his pain and thinking: A long way home . . . ah, well, I was too much afraid of it. We have all so much more courage than we think.

THE SAND UNDER THE DOOR

ROGER ROUGHTON

THE band was there to see him off, in spite of the rain. It was kind of the mayor or whoever arranged these things, Var thought as an attendant opened the door of the official car for him. All the people who had to be were there waiting to cheer him and listen to his speech and cheer again, as well as several who seemed to have come of their own accord, out of respect for him or perhaps only from curiosity.

As he stepped out of the car he slipped on the wet kerb, but the attendant caught his arm and steadied him. Var had to stop and wipe his forehead; his face had turned white too: perhaps the crowd would not notice. Evidently not, everybody was silent, too silent. There had been a slight hitch in the programme, the cheering had not come soon enough, and now a sturdy man dressed in red and black made an open sign to the people. Everyone began to shout Var's name and wave hats and red or white handkerchiefs. Certainly not spontaneous, Var thought and frowned. No one noticed his frown and when he took off his hat they cheered louder and called, 'Speech, speech.' Var was hardly under cover and all round him were puddles of rainwater which was dripping from the cracks in the glass roof. He walked a few steps more, pretending that he had not heard the cries for a speech, or that if he had he realized, of course, that it was only a joke. He decided that his first impression was wrong; actually the organizers were lazy and inefficient: first the cheering incident, then expecting him to make a speech on this wet station pavement; also, he realized as he looked at the noisy crowd, there appeared to be no photographers. That was extraordinary, had none of the newspapers been told that he was leaving that afternoon; press permits should have been issued at the same time as the special platform tickets.

The crowd was still shouting, 'Speech, speech,' so Var stopped; he would make his speech there then, but it would not be the speech he had prepared, not what they wanted at all, in fact. He held up his hand and after a final burst of cheering everyone was silent. Then Var realized that the band had been playing all the time, and with the crowd silent it was a pleasant change, so that he would have liked to listen longer. But the man dressed in red and black tapped the conductor on the shoulder and the music stopped as decisively as the cheering.

Var looked round slowly at the obedient uninterested people; now he would wake them up and, discarding the carefully composed speech of thanks and good wishes, would tell them the real reason of his leaving and the truth about the meeting, if he could remember it all. The man in red and black seemed to be someone of importance, so Var, guessing strongly, turned to him as he began to speak:

'My Lord, ladies and gentlemen,' he said; but at the last word the station bell rang and everyone turned and pushed towards the platform, cheering again and shouting Var's name, though taking no notice of Var himself. Only the uniformed man stayed behind, waiting for Var to go forward himself, and Var saw that he was a porter, though evidently of a special kind, for he wore a bronze star pinned to his coat lapel. He walked in front pushing the truck with Var's luggage on it; when they came to the barrier the porter passed on, but the inspector stopped Var. There was some mistake, his ticket had not been bought, he would have to buy one at the booking office.

'This is ridiculous,' said Var; 'You spend pounds on engaging a band and professional cheerers, yet you won't spend a few shillings on my ticket, nor give me a pass.' But the inspector only waved him away, it was nothing to do with him. The other people were already on the platform, all wearing white permits in their hats, but Var had to run back to the booking hall. The clerk evidently knew him for he handed over the ticket before he was asked for it, but Var had to pay just the same. However

the ticket given to him was a first-class one, so he exchanged it for a third. He walked slowly and indignantly back to the barrier and handed this ticket to the inspector without speaking or looking at him.

The platform though small could easily have held everyone if distributed over the whole surface, but instead the people preferred or had been ordered to crowd themselves up in one corner uncomfortably, so that Var had half the platform to himself. He was apparently the only one from the village to be travelling on this train for apart from the onlookers there was no one in sight, not even a porter. The train was due in two minutes and Var moved towards the crowd, intending to ask someone if he knew where the uniformed porter was. But all were quiet now and made no attempt to throng round him as he had expected; indeed, as he approached, those in the front row tried to retreat a little, and when he called out to ask if anyone had seen his luggage, nobody appeared to hear.

The train was late and Var became impatient at his own tramping up and down the puddled platform, so he turned to the waiting room. He would have liked to have drunk at the buffet but it was too late in the afternoon, and anyhow after paying for his ticket (which was certainly more than a 'few shillings') he had little spare money left. There seemed small chance of finding his luggage: he could have gone past the ticket box and searched for the porter, but after his uncivil treatment by his supposed adherents he felt disinclined to do that and indeed was quite resigned about the whole matter.

The walls of the waiting-room were green: that was what he noticed first. In the far corner there was a small coal fire which hardly worried the damp air of the room. Round three walls a wooden bench was fixed; in the middle of the dusty room was a chipped table covered surprisingly by a spotless white cloth.

Var closed the door and turned carefully to look out of the yellow window; no one either on this or the other side of the line was looking into the waiting-room. Several times he walked

round the table slowly and with his hands clasped behind his back as he had done on the platform, then with an effort he stopped and climbed on to the table. For a little he only knelt there, shaking and with white face, not daring to move, but after peering round the simple, empty room he lowered himself till he was lying flat on his back. This, he thought, was really dangerous, but also satisfying and essential. Someone, the special porter perhaps, might come in and, looking at the white cloth and the bare oblong room, would be mistaken; or the train might come into the station soon and he would have to jump up hurriedly and run out looking for his luggage and, indeed, lose all the comfort of his rest; or he might fall asleep and the train would go without him and he would have to face the anti-climax of a three hour wait; or the marks of his muddy shoes on the white cloth might be noticed by an angry station-master and before the crowd he might have to pay for the laundering, with laughter outside. But he was so tired by the standing and the long speeches before, that he closed his eyes and only hoped without much interest that none of the things he imagined would happen.

A white flash cut through his eyelids, and he saw the only press photographer who had arrived and who was now standing, with upraised arm outside the waiting-room window. Var was not much concerned at seeing him, but while he was looking at the thin-faced man he heard the train shaking the rails, so he sat up, climbed to the floor, and ran out on the platform. As the carriages passed Var he tried to see in at the windows, but they were streaming and steaming so much that he could see nothing but blurred shadows; no carriage seemed full and the compartment that stopped opposite him was empty. As he opened the door the people, who had been silent and sheltering at the other end of the platform, hurried towards him; he stepped into the compartment and, shutting the door, let down the window and looked out at the crowd now jostling below him.

'Where is my luggage?' said Var, but did not expect to see it again nor care: the crowd cheered loudly. The members of the

band came running from the booking hall and, standing as close as they could, started to play, till the crowd cheered again.

Evidently the guard had blown his whistle, though no one could hear it, for the train moved slowly away. Var waved his hat and smiled and the people waved their handkerchiefs again, red and white again and this time a few black. Var went on waving till he saw that his hat was getting wet and that the platform was empty.

With difficulty he shut the window, then throwing his hat and coat on to the rack he leant back against the hard dusty upholstery, and lit a cigarette. This was a corridor train and soon he must go through it looking for his luggage which was probably simply in the van, but at the moment he felt apathetic and disinclined to move away from his airtight security. All his books and papers were locked up in his suitcase so that he had nothing to read, but could only smoke and stare out of the window or sleep. In spite of the closed door and window the air was cold and damp, so Var reached for his coat again and with it on sat again in the corner and rubbed the side window with his sleeve.

No one had passed by his glass door down the corridor yet, but to make sure he rose again and pulled down the brown blinds; then he sat down once more in the corner, lit another cigarette and turned to look out of the window. Now for a little time he was safe, the train would not stop again for an hour and no one was likely to leave the many empty carriages to come to his. In the corner too he felt secure, defended by his heavy coat with collar turned up to hide his chin and the back of his head, with his hands in the big pockets, and cigarette smoke half hiding his face. The compartment was dark and it was quite possible, he thought, that even though people looked straight at him they might not see him.

The country the train was passing through was flat, with few houses. Fields ran up to the track railings and many were quite covered by the water; others were boggy with mud pools by the cattle gates, and over all and in the hedges was a mist of rain. In

the background the land rose a little and there looked darker, and the rain blew across the marshy fields and the hedges and the few trees and beat in strong gusts against the windows, running and heard above the wheels. Var moved even closer to the wood window frame and tightened his limbs, proud of the stale clouds of smoke which he was slowly and painstakingly blowing into the room and round the unlit ceiling light. The beating of the rails shook his body and shook his face till he shut his eyes and the muddy fields leapt away.

He thought lazily of the afternoon as it had passed him so far: first there had been the reception, then the long speeches, but he could not remember much of those and moreover it worried him to think about them; surely something else had happened, but he would not try to think about that. The ride to the station had been quick and he had not noticed which way they had come, but he remembered well how he had slipped as he stepped out of the car: that was something he could not easily forget. The send off had been poorly arranged and had not satisfied him at all, his luggage was perhaps lost, and there would be that photograph of him lying dressed on the white waiting-room table. His speech before also—no paper of course would be able to print that because something, he could not remember what, had stopped him from making it. Certainly it would have been a fine speech if he had been able to remember all that had happened before at the meeting and the reception; but perhaps it was as well that he had been interrupted for he might have forgotten everything he had wished to tell them, and they would only have thought him careless or stupid, not knowing at all how difficult was the thing he was trying to say. Though he had made the decision quickly, the decision to substitute what he knew of the few hours before, in place of the empty genial speech he had learnt by heart, it had been very hard for him; and now that the big and nervous effort had been useless he would not easily be able again to stand out so wildly against his own habits and fears.

For a short time he was free and need not say anything. Only

he could lie huddled and hidden by his strong overcoat in the corner of the dark, damp and smoky compartment with blinds drawn down, and could smoke cigarettes, lighting one from the other sometimes not half finished; and no one would touch the door and blow out the dark and the smoke, no one would come at all to speak to him, except perhaps a ticket-inspector or a guard, and Var knew that to those he need say nothing if he were careful which would make him noticed or spoken of in surprise or anger. He could shut his eyes and be sure, almost sure, that, when he opened them again, somehow there would not be a stranger, perhaps stone-faced, sitting opposite or beside him. Only he must be careful not to go to sleep, for then so many things might happen and he would not understand nor later be able to explain them to himself. Again, if he were to sleep then all the smoke would dissolve and disappear and his cigarettes would have been wasted.

For some time Var hid behind his smoke screen and his thick coat collar till he moved into the rhythm of the wheels; but the wind and rain beats disturbed him and, rolling ponderously on the dusty seat, he drew a few papers from his coat pocket. Looking through them lazily but anxiously with half-closed eyes, he picked out an old letter, written crudely; and he was alone.

Dear Var,

I have been here for a week now, but have you wondered how I like it? For me the country is the same as for you I think; only what you would expect: a rest after heavy towns and still a slight disappointment. Yet I am not anxious to leave again; even if I were it would hardly be easy: here I have no money, all my wages are paid to me in kind, food, bed, fire, a few clothes, a ticket at the local cinema and perhaps a girl, cigarettes, drinks on the house, but never a train fare nor a car, and in the evenings I must walk to the village. I have still two shillings left, but those I have hidden carefully and shall not touch. Sometime, they say, if I show myself to be a strong and clever worker, they will give me money and time to go away. For the present I am content and willing to stay here indefinitely, anxious to see you again, and work with you, working and laughing near me.

John

Var read the letter, very slowly, twice, spinning each silent

word round his mouth, then reluctantly folded it back into the envelope. He looked again through the papers and picked out a second envelope in the same handwriting. This one was dated a week later and Var read it even more slowly than the first.

Dear Var,

I was so glad to get your letter and to hear that you are coming so soon. Still I cannot make up my mind. Perhaps you will do that for me. The days I enjoy, although in theory they are of so little importance or even interest. I wake at about seven, later than everyone else in the house, and do no work before breakfast; in fact generally, apart from the lack of money in any form, my life is simple and never hard. How long I shall find this surrender of control soothing, and that is what it now seems, I don't know, but at least for the moment I am well content and would not, I think, return to complete independence, even if I could. This will probably sound bad to you and perhaps later I shall again agree with you and my former self; in the meantime. . . .

After breakfast I have often to do some clerical work, though there is never much of it, chiefly answering occasional letters and once a week the accounting of the petty cash. But this never takes long and by nine-thirty I am out in the fields and this, strangely, is the time which I most look forward to. Now, while I am learning still and doing little serious work, each day I am given something new; it seldom needs much intensive thought and while I work I am free to consider what I wish. I never eat at the farm in the middle of the day, instead I . . . but maybe all this bores you, and anyhow I shall soon see you and be able to show and tell you everything until you are tired of it all; *and* you will be able to criticize for yourself: for that I should be, and am, extremely grateful, though I am so uncertain how you will stand it.

Goodbye then for a few days; I shall try hard to take time off to meet you at the station, but don't be surprised if work keeps me away.

Yours, John

Var was surprised by the quiet ignorance of the letter, by the wish for him to come, and by the rest in fields; but when he had read it again and again until he forgot the stale smoke screen and the insistent wheels, he was not even then entirely sure. There was a chance that John had never written either letter, perhaps he was not even there. He had only once seen the other's handwriting and would not be certain whether or not this were the same. Perhaps both letters had been written by the people at the farm, in which case they must have opened his letter to John, warning

him: if that was so, he would have to be prepared for a hostile and probably dangerous reception. The second letter had not mentioned his warning at all; if John had really written the letter, had he kept silent through fear of censorship, or had he been quite unable to understand the message? Certainly Var remembered its terms were very vague: but that was only natural because not only his suspicions but his accusations also were hardly formed in his own mind. Then he had forgotten so much, just as today he had forgotten what had happened at the civic reception. If the second letter was written by the farm people, the reason for the ignoring of his warning was not at all obvious; surely they would have made some reference to it in order to allay his suspicions; but perhaps they too had been unable to interpret his roundabout and metaphorical phrases as a warning of any kind. Var wished that he could recall exactly what he had written. No, the silence about his warning did not help, but the style of writing, might tell him more. Certainly the serious conversational tone was like John's, but a general idiom like that might have been guessed by his employers from everyday meetings with John. At least that meant that he must be there. But particular phrases such as 'for the present I am content and willing to stay here indefinitely' were unlike John's; on the other hand he qualified a similar remark later by saying that he might change his mind in the future. Yes, on the whole Var thought that John must have written both letters, though they were decidedly intimate in tone, considering that he had only met Var a fortnight before he left. Var wished he could be quite sure: he would feel so much safer if he could be certain that John would be there when he arrived, ready to help him and advise, and perhaps to shield him, though John himself did not sound at all powerful.

Anyway, he did not want to think more about John or the farm people or arriving. Quickly he lit another cigarette and leaned back in his dusty corner. But he had to think about the farm; only two weeks ago he had had that telegram warning him that he might be needed on the farm and telling him to go

to see John. John was apprenticed to a lawyer on the High Street; in the small office he was typing a will. He told Var that he had also had a telegram from the farm the day before, telling him to go immediately. He had decided to obey: like Var he hated the village life, wanted to go away and try something new, even though it might be worse. Certainly the wording of the telegram was stern, suggesting hard discipline, but everyone spoke so highly of the farm and said it was an honor and a chance of advancement to go there. Perhaps it was not a step to independence, but any uncertainty was better than the certain bond of the village.

John and Var liked each other, and John was glad when he heard that the other had been warned that he too might be needed on the farm. He promised to write to Var when he reached there. When he left he also was given a reception, though not as large a one as Var's, since John's father was only a small lawyer.

Then yesterday Var had had the second telegram, telling him to come immediately; he was not at all surprised. John's letters implied that he knew definitely that Var would be coming this day; he did not think apparently of the possibility of Var refusing.

And now Var was travelling to join him, trying not to think of the past or the future, alone in a railway compartment with blinds drawn, hiding behind his cigarette smoke, staring at the rain across the moors.

It was growing hard to see the indefinite fields, and by the time the train stopped at a small station it was quite dark. Var looked out at the poorly lit platform hoping no one would get in. But someone was fingering the door-handle: a young man and a girl climbed into Var's compartment. The man was serious with a dark face, worried now; the girl was lighter and good-looking, she was carrying a small case. Var shut his eyes as they turned towards him, and the train started. But anyhow they took no notice of him.

'Well?' said the young man.

'I'm glad, Jose,' said the girl, 'you know I'm happy; I'm just thinking now about the office, that's all, I just wish we could have waited till my holiday; now they will never take me back and it is so hard to find work in a new town. But still I'm glad I've come.'

'I know,' said Jose, 'but I had to leave immediately, otherwise they would have caught me: I had no time to explain before, but now you understand, don't you?' The girl nodded.

'We'll go to some small town where they won't look for me, and we'll find some quiet country work; nothing will touch us.'

Var opened his eyes; he did not wish any longer to be isolated: 'I have heard what you were saying,' he said to the two, 'and I was wondering whether you would like to work on the farm; the discipline is strict, and you cannot go there without a formal command, but I should do my best to recommend you. No one would dare to follow you there.'

The two looked at him in surprise, made no attempt to answer, then turned away; nor did they once speak to Var before they left. Var was bewildered and unhappy: bewildered by the fact that they should so rudely ignore what was a kind and probably useful offer, unhappy because his effort to end his voluntary isolation had been so unsuccessful. Perhaps, though he could hardly believe it, neither of them had heard of the farm, did not know what an honor it was to work there, how great a kindness Var was doing them when he offered to recommend them. He lit another cigarette and huddled back in the dark corner. The rain still drove against the windows out of the night, and the rhythm soothed him again. At least he had left the village for ever.

In an hour the train stopped again at a baggage halt. A woman, her face covered by a heavy scarf, entered the compartment and sat down next to Var; she was carrying nothing. Along the train Var could hear the doors being methodically opened and shut and sometimes a question being asked. Two officials opened the door of Var's compartment; he recognized them as two men who had once lived in his village.

'Good evening, sir,' one of them said to Var; 'we are looking for a young man who perhaps entered this train at the last stop, possibly with a young woman. Is this the man?' he asked, pointing at Jose.

'No,' said Var, 'that is a friend of mine, who is travelling with me. I am sorry I cannot help you.'

'Thank you, sir,' said the official, and both passed on to the next door.

Var expected at least some spoken thanks, however much grudged, but the two did not look at him, seemed not to have heard him at all. He was angry: he had saved them from being arrested for some unknown crime, and they did not even pretend to be grateful. He thought of running after the officials and telling them that he had made a mistake, but did not know how to explain his lie; and he was afraid.

Instead, as the train started, he turned to look at the woman beside him; she had not taken the scarf from her face, though the carriage was now hot. Var wished to speak to her, but she sat so still and straight that he did not dare. The others were evidently as uninterested in her as they were in Var; clasped together, they were whispering seriously.

The train should only stop once more now before reaching the station near the farm, which should be in half-an-hour. Till then Var had an uncertain freedom. But suddenly he wanted violently to reach the farm, strict though it might be, and see comfortable, sensible John, work with him in the fields and forget the village and the train. He wanted to escape from the hostile lovers, the silent scarfed woman, the heavy smoke round the ceiling light, the motions of the carriage, the unknown countryside, and the certain storm.

And he remembered his luggage, he must find that: he stood up, slid back the catch of the door, and turned to the left, since his was the last carriage. Moving carefully towards the next carriage, he stared into the other compartments: all were empty. At the end of the corridor he tried the communicating door: it was

locked. Var was annoyed; he would have to wait now till he left the train, before searching the luggage van. He returned to his corner.

It had stopped raining, but the wind blew more strongly. Now the track ran beside the seashore for some time before turning inland again, towards the farm country.

The two were talking loudly: 'We had better get out at the next station, in case they look for me again,' said Jose, 'then perhaps in the morning we can take a boat, if the storm has dropped.' The girl agreed. The silent woman had not moved.

When the train stopped at the small harbor, the two climbed out; 'Goodbye,' cried Var, half-heartedly; they did not answer. A gust of wind blew sand from the wooden platform into the compartment. And the smoke curled out round the door-frame.

Now, thought Var, I am alone with a silent woman and my fear, riding through the high wind and the dunes to a possible future. The storm seemed to rock the carriage more than before. Var decided to speak to the still woman.

'Are you too going to the farm?' he asked. The woman did not speak but seemed to nod her head slightly; Var took it as Yes.

'I am glad,' he said: 'I only know one person there and him only slightly; I hope I shall see you there often.' The woman still did not speak; Var was puzzled but pleased that there was someone else arriving at the farm with him. It was strange that John had said nothing about it in his letters.

He looked at the white skin of her hand: she could hardly be going to work on the land. Perhaps she was the daughter of one of the owners.

Var stamped out his cigarette on the floor. 'Why don't you speak to me?' he asked. 'What is your name? Why do you cover your face?'

The train rocked; sand slapped against the windows. The figure beside him turned slightly towards Var. The train was slowing down, though it had not yet turned inland to the farm station.

Var said, 'I have left my village after a ceremony which I cannot remember. I left alone to go to the farm, after a formal departure; there will be a photograph of me, lying on a white table. No one would tell me where my luggage was. When the small crowd waved goodbye, some had black handkerchiefs. In this carriage I have hidden behind kind smoke. I spoke to the two lovers, shielded them from the officials, but they spoke no formal words to me. Perhaps they will escape. I am going to work on the farm with a friend who is possibly after all not there. The wind is blowing the sand from the dunes against this train, and I am afraid. At the top of the window I can see the veins and arteries, colored by a certain hand.'

The train stopped. The wind broke in the windows. The figure rose and moved away from Var; as she opened the door he seized the scarf and pulled it from her face. He looked into the smooth stone stare; she ran over the dunes, over the shore, into the sea. Black clouds followed across the sky. Var leapt after her, and the door blew shut. He saw the train departing, but their carriage stood still.

'Come back,' cried Var, falling in the great water, 'come back.' He could only see the long shore.

The sand blew into the empty carriage, through the broken windows and under the door.

BEFORE THE LAW

FRANZ KAFKA

(Translated by Heinz Berggruen)

BEFORE the Law stands a doorkeeper. To this doorkeeper comes a man from the country and asks for entrance to the Law. But the doorkeeper says that he can not grant him entrance now. The man reflects upon it and asks then whether he might enter later. "It is possible," says the doorkeeper, "but not now."

Since the gate to the Law stands open as always and the doorkeeper steps aside, the man stoops down to look through the gate to the inside. When the doorkeeper notices this, he laughs and says: "If it attracts you so much, why don't you try to enter in spite of my forbidding it? But notice: I am mighty. And yet I am but the lowliest doorkeeper. From hall to hall stand doorkeepers, one mightier than the other. The sight of the third one alone not even I can bear."

Such difficulties the man from the country has not expected. The Law is supposed to be accessible to everybody and at all times, he thinks, but as he looks closer at the doorkeeper in his fur coat, at his large pointed nose, his long, thin, black tartaric beard, he decides that he had better wait until he be given permission to enter.

The doorkeeper gives him a stool and lets him sit down by the door. There he sits days and years. He makes many attempts to be let in and wearies the doorkeeper with his requests. Frequently the doorkeeper puts him under brief cross-examinations; he asks him about his home and about many other matters. But they are indifferent questions such as great lords ask, and at the end he always says that he can not let him in.

The man, who has equipped himself for his journey with many things, uses everything, no matter how valuable, to bribe

the doorkeeper. The doorkeeper, indeed, accepts everything, but he says at the same time: "I only accept it so that you won't feel that there is anything you have neglected."

During the many years the man observes the doorkeeper almost uninterruptedly. He forgets the other doorkeepers and this first one seems to him the only obstacle to his entrance to the Law. In the first years he curses the unfortunate happening recklessly and loudly; later, as he grows old, he only grumbles to himself. He becomes childish and, since in his years of studying the doorkeeper he has come to recognize even the fleas in his fur collar, he asks the fleas, too, to help him and to make the doorkeeper change his mind.

Finally, his eyesight becomes weak and he does not know whether it grows really darker around him or whether his eyes merely deceive him. Yet in the dark now he notices a light that inextinguishably bursts out of the door to the Law. Now his life draws to a close. Before his death all the experiences of this whole period crystallize into one question which, until then, he has not asked the doorkeeper. He motions to him for he can no longer straighten his stiffening body. The doorkeeper has to bend deep down, for the difference in size has greatly changed in disfavor of the man.

"What is it that you still want to know?" asks the doorkeeper, "you are insatiable."

"Since all strive for the Law," says the man, "why is it that in these many years no one but I has asked for entrance?"

The doorkeeper recognizes that the man is already at his end, and, to still reach his vanishing hearing, he shouts at him: "No one else could gain entrance here. For this entrance was only for you. Now I shall close it."

LUDEK

BERNARD GEDANKEN

THE lamp burns among many sharp lines. But the brown cord knows no rest. Suspended, it weaves from side to side. In slow circles, wandering. But the brown cord, between the lamp and the tag, is not complete, for it is fastened from a white string. The knot is carelessly turned. White, frayed ends drip down for a while and stop, while the brown cord makes its motion.

This intrigues the mice.

These are circumspect creatures, and have many holes. From little eyes they observe the cord's restlessness. Then they begin to fear for their sight, and they run aside, squeaking. Lost fear. For the cord does revolve: up and back, in ceaseless ellipses. No wind bothers, nobody stands behind pushing. But the string traverses its low path silently, completely—like a pendulum. Wasteful path: replete, determined.

From its tip hangs a crazy tag: a round card, advertising bread—soft white bread to fill us full and fat. Like certain rats in the cellar below, hidden. Red-eyed, they peer and pause; then they hide, for so are they habituated. They are most filthy. Even cats will not eat them, doting on the mice upstairs whom they terrorize. Meanwhile, the tag turns too; spins upon its axis; winds up the brown cord and spins back, relieved. A crazy tag, pent-up, dismal, full of tensions and complexes. Never still; never satisfied. Rats and mice too.

You too.

Mr. Ludek, the Grocer, is behind the counter. He wears spectacles; they are black-rimmed, and the thick lenses make his eyes look small and frightened—and reddish, as his rats. Yes, he is a little furry man with rodential proclivities: which is why he tolerates them, though at times he curses the scampering forms bitterly. They eat up his profits, he wails; they drive away the

customers; spoil the goods. But he sells the nibbled goods anyhow, and advertises for the purpose of enticing new customers. After a while he loses them once more, for his bread is dry, his meats stale, his milk sour. Then he curses and condemns his mice and his rats, forgetting them shortly after. For a strange affinity subsumes. Yes.

(When Ludek rests his hands upon the counter, he feels like running. He peers around him pointedly; his thin eyes squint; his knuckles doing an unquiet tap. He is stuck to a moustache, and this he works—twitchingly. His ears stand up straight and show their veins. The nostrils tremble, the lean nose narrows and sniffs convulsively, for Ludek has an excellent sense of smell, and would have made a superb . . . ? ? ? Yes.)

It is already eleven o'clock, and the streets are black. Occasionally, Ludek can descry a blurred figure walking through the square of light his window drops. Tonight he even saw one man wheeling a second in an invalid's chair, but it did not enter his store at all, and Ludek had cursed it completely—for he is an embittered man and frightened. His last patron comes, he recognizes, at ten-thirty; but Ludek stays open: just in case. He must needs make sure that no one will come; he must needs have had every possible sale. Fear that he will miss one troubles his chest.

Once, he had closed the store at ten-thirty. And he had spent the next two hours pacing the kitchen floor. To every sound he had started, imagining that his grocery door was being tried; several times he had walked back into the darkness, peering around him quickly, searching, especially, into the corners. No one. Silently, in even rows, shining cans lined the shelves. Ludek had listened. Mice, stirring in the corners, had left a faint thrill in his hand. No one. Then he had returned, to resume the sick pacing. Finally, he had gone to bed; fallen into an insane sleep after a wretched time. The following night he had stayed open late, with his mice, leaning his grey claws on the counter, the degenerate lids opening to sharp corners, his tiny bloodless lips making a pale scratch on his face.

Now, bending over intently, Ludek writes. He figures his accounts in a little crooked chirography; for Ludek resembles his handwriting: small and distorted. The tails of his "y" and "g" run backwards, curling over their heads, as though Ludek enjoyed prolonging them. Laboriously had he learned to write, years ago, when he had first come from Poland. But without deliberate effort. The sharp rodent mind had caught on slowly, by itself, its claws clinging to the figures; transfixed, they were settled in the tiny pupils, and there Ludek watched them move and maunder—copying them off in his own image.

He writes with little jerky movements. The pen halts; staggers; then it drives swiftly on a pace, retreating suddenly, ceasing. And at each pause a silence sets in. Then the mice scratch and the bread-tag relents. Unspins slowly, while the mice watch, poised for a break.

Ludek writes. Now and again he glances up. With penetration, from side to side, his glasses glinting, for Ludek keeps them highly polished and cannot stand a speck. His doors are closed, and all his windows. Ludek is afraid of entering things.

Once a cat had prowled in on four paws, soundlessly; turning its head and neck in a grave search. Meaningless, grey eyes had caught Ludek's. He saw the white whiskers waver, the striped yellow jaws fill with hungry glee. He saw the tail bolt erect, moving in a cautious strangle at its termination. The glasses had stared, glinting in the morning light. Ludek's claws had slid down to the counter; gripped it harshly. His whole spine had bent low, the moustache working nervously. One foot had been set back: a lever, a spring.

Poised for a break?

Yes indeed, Ludek is allergic to cats and keeps his exits closed, for he dislikes them intensely and cannot stand them. At all.

His figures finished, Ludek drops the pen, and then, muttering twisted phrases, throws it into the drawer just below. He is angry. He sucks in his cheeks. Here it is eleven o'clock and he has not seen a single person for the last half hour. No wonder he

has failed to save a nickel; it is the location and the boys who mark up and disfigure his windows. One day he will catch one. Ludek blows and sniffs while his moustache turns on an angle.

The drawer is still open, and now he notices that in throwing the pen aside he has broken the nib. It is hopelessly bent. This makes Ludek very angry, and, a little pale, he says to himself that he must replace the nib.

He keeps pen-points, he knows, in a little cardboard box at the darkened end of his store. This whole section is obscured with shadow, and musty with many silken spider-webs, for Ludek is a little lax with his broom at this particular spot; he is seldom called upon to make inquiries here. But in this corner he keeps Stationery. Maintaining boxes and boxes of envelopes, clearly labelled with the name and trade-mark of the firm manufacturing the brands. Here too, are Pen-holders, Rubber-stamps, Pins, Notebooks, Pencils, Rings, Clips, and numerous articles which he never sells and never will. But Ludek knows where they are, for he is efficient and deft; he has a good memory; that is, he does not forget. In fact, he prides himself on his memory. Clearly, he remembers the face of a certain little boy who stole candy behind his back and made moose-ears to him. He can recall everything and anything.

At one time he had placed a particular box of cleaning powder in some splinter of his cellar, and, a year later, had remembered at once its exact locale. Yes, plunging through the tissue of web and soot, he had retrieved the container of sandy white lumps; then, having inserted his nose into as many holes and crevices as possible, he had scampered up the cellar stairs, his feet askew, to make the gracious sale. After that, he felt very proud of himself—making many such trips, for he found that he became clear and abandoned in the cellar: a headiness he revelled in swelled upon his brain, made his heart pound; there grew strange yearnings in his arms, while brilliant lines of light danced within his eyes and before them. Then, his ears queerly sharpened, he would hear rats stir—faint rustlings that penetrated into his bones; his

ears would spring doubly alert, pointing tersely to the roof. Perhaps he would see them. The grey lost shapes were not so fearful in his presence, darting often across his path, between his enervated feet. When this happened, curious sounds leaked off his protruding tongue, the hair on the nape of his neck became cold. A great fright would seize him; he would run upstairs quickly—in his terror barking his shins on the stairway. Near the dull unlit stove he would stand, looking around him, surveying his ashy pants, his shoes, his trembling hands.

Timid. Fearful.

Returning at the earliest pretext.

Fascinated?

So Ludek will have to get a nib, and he cannot put it off even though it is already eleven and time for closing. Anyway, he has determined to make another sale, if it take him all night; he is going to get a final customer. Meanwhile, he will look for a nib. He knows that tomorrow morning he will need his pen, since his patrons must sign their IOUs with ink. For Ludek is circumspect and wary, and does not trust pencils. His inclinations are odd, and he has . . . he has . . . ? ? ?

More eye-teeth than is customary?

But then it comes to Ludek that just possibly there is a nib in the very drawer beneath. In some corner? The prospect fills him with glee, and he starts to search. His yellow claws pry, dig; behind the glasses feverish eyes flame. Papers, papers, papers. Ludek spades and hacks and hatchets. Erasers, a ruler, a pad. Junk on junk, but no nib. The nails scrape into the corners, grasping. Wrist deep in odds and ends, claws are entangled and lost. They squirm and feel and hold and try and let fall, eyes transformed into eager slits.

Nothing: and warm annoyance spills down Ludek's spine. For he needs a nib, he must have a nib, he cannot tell you how badly he must lay his claws upon a nib. Bending his neck low, his eyes staring from his small skull, Ludek examines, pulls, tears, tramples.

Nothing.

Ludek relaxes. The anger branching in him sags; he will have to go to the shelves after all, and there is no use getting wrought up about it.

But as he walks along the isle, he frowns. He knows there was a nib in that drawer; he himself put it there, he can even recall the day and the hour. Where can it have gone? Ludek wonders who has been going through his drawers. He does not keep money there, and now he congratulates himself on his good sense. Wait.

Wait!

The bills? ? ? What of the bills! They were not there, no, he had not touched them. No! They were gone, gone! Robbed!

Fear slashes its eye-tooth into his throat, and Ludek crashes back, tearing open the drawer in agony.

Lying still and flat, the bills grin at him, winking.

A long thin whistle of expiration, then Ludek starts for the shelves again. But his knees tremble with total relief; the eyes in his head, crude stones. And in his arms, the strange yearn. As for the nib, he does not know; besides, here are the shelves and soon Ludek will have obtained his objective. His eyes drop back, flare; peek and pause from spot to spot, pattering.

His objective.

The shelves are barely bothered with light, and very comfortable in the shadows. This is because the single bulb maintained by Ludek at this hour stews mostly in its own yellow juice. What is more, a kind of partition, which is actually one side of the passage-way burrowing from the Grocery to Ludek's smoky living hole, interferes with even this wasted glimmer. The shelves are old; dusty. A useless bottle opener is speared to a wooden ledge, caked with rust. Ludek places one mouldered claw upon it as he makes his preliminary investigation. Anxiously, his eyes spread their little rays. He wipes the sweat of his hand on the cool opener. Shadows touch. Taint.

Ludek is breathing heavily. He stands tense; erect; the veins of

his ears bulging in blue clarity. What is this? Ludek's spotty eyes skim and scamper—dark rolling grains. He looks more anxiously, more carefully, holding his tense eyes by the neck. But a worried anger comes into them, emitting a dangerous sparkling fluid. Ludek is examining the shelves closely, but the angry question on his mouth grows. Where are the nibs? Ludek brushes a label. Where?

He removes the dirty box, looks behind sharply.

Dust.

Grey soft dust, in lovely hypnotic planes. Beneath the box, the shelf is surprisingly clean; and the contrast heightens the mouse quality of the incalculable motes gathered around. How wondrous a pattern!—rectangular, perfect; and Ludek removes a second box, just adjacent.

A checkerboard! Leaping upon his brain. For some seconds Ludek stares entranced. The yearn aches in his arms, pricks needles into his fingers. Then, with a sudden motion—like a drunkard giving in—Ludek runs a finger through the incredible grey carpet. A clear path trails behind.

Ludek is amazed.

So soft, so restful. His mouth falls from him, drops of breath trickling through. Then, quickly, surrendering to the great lust, he folds once more his finger through the dust—turning it in graceful curls, curves, tangles—into a wave of rippling line—making, lastly, a “y” whose tail he coils and coils, over, and over, and over. After that, he removes his finger gradually, and peeks with his tiny eyes at the elliptical drop of dust on the ball of his finger. Eagerly he stands. Watching. Hearing. His nose is thin, nostrilled, bent closely to the finger. His moustache makes erratic designs. And the finger trembles, unevenly.

Then Ludek drops his hand; shakes his head, clearing two long furrows from his brow. Running his doll-like claws through his hair, he tries to remember. But everything balks stubbornly, enshadowed. Loose ends drift and turn, like the final sigh of faded things. Grey weed, entangled? Threads, uncaught,

the burnt call of rainbow lands, weeping. Darkness, broken across the torturous tears of wasted, weary, wailing. Time. Darkness?

Was that the Darkness? and the twining hollow Space? Bright slits, caverns, winding through the lanes of Night. Noises and shapes: vague twilight shapes, always hurrying past the sickening motion of laughing days. Laughing eyes! Laughing eyes! Where your dizzy arms and legs, you laughing eyes! And leaping, scratching Terror! Above all, an odor—ancient, rancid—fungus and rotted vegetation. Ludek clings to his breath. The smell waves over him, touching—for it has many arms and legs, has Laughing Eyes. Crawls over him, tangling; finding vents, crevices. Crevices? Crevices? And cracks, yes, and colors; diseased yellow and gold, pale white, and often weary rose and Laughing Eyes, Laughing Eyes, Laughing Eyes. Surrounding all, everlasting, spun across remorse and Laughing Eyes. Watery Times slow whirl, the spewed remnants, the limbs, the slime, pendant from the lids of Laughing Eyes. Vision, deep despair, come Ceiling and sorry Earth to the lids of Laughing Eyes. Like that of, like that of, of—Ludek falters, his temples cracking,—like that of, of . . . like that of . . . of . . . of . . .

!Nib!

The nib! Ludek clutches his wet hair with both claws. The Nib! He must find a nib! He came here to get a nib, and he has been staring at the dust. Instead of searching for that necessary nib! Tomorrow, and the nib! He will need a nib! Nib!

A tremendous rage assembles in Ludek's throat. Tearing at his entrails. Nib! Nib! He will find that nib! He will! Will!

Laughing-eyes, Laughing-eyes,
Tell me why you laugh,
Laughing-eyes.

He smashes back the boxes he has removed, grabs others brutally. Trembling, he paws into all the corners; into silken webs,

filth, and ancient dirt. Searching and smearing about, in a fever of rage and futility, his claws scrape and clutch, snapping, groping. Furious, he flings containers and pads and inks to the floor, where they break, rolling about in spirals, groaning. Twisted and torn, they lie, mangled, broken. Scattered and crushed. Heedlessly, Ludek demolishes whatever falls into his hands.

And Laughing-eyes?
Laughing-eyes?
Silly, silken laughter,
Laughing-eyes.

Ludek's face is pale, ghastly—its pores open and reeking; his nose quivers out, long and lean; his tongue protrudes from his mouth, coated and green, slaverling.

Laugh, laugh, laugh,
Laughing-eyes.
Laughing greenish laughter,
Laughing-eyes.

Down the shelves, Ludek rips, tears, shatters. Arms aching, moustache jerking viciously, he breaks wide seals and cartons. He laughs! Turning his laughter into curses, haranguing the walls with his incoherent phrases. Nib! Nib! Nib!

No nib.

No nib! Ludek's eyes fill with furious tears. Nib! He must have that nib, and he thrashes his arms about the wall in despair. He will wreck and smash the whole store, but before he is done he will have that nib. He will have that nib! Nib! Nib!

Laugh! laugh! laugh!
Laughing-eyes,
Only nibs for laughter,
Laughing-eyes.

But there is no nib, and with tight fists he begins to hammer at the shelves, and at his shadow as it pursues his grotesque exertions. Beating and flapping his arms like drumsticks, cries fall from his torn mouth; and then he starts to kick with his feet. He stands aside wide; ends the painful useless punches—and kicks! Deliberately. With the tips of his shoes, and aiming. Vicious, sharp kicks.

But Laughing-eyes,
Laughing-eyes . . . ?

They smash into the boxes, knock down jars, crush the delicate papers. Ludek's hair is wild; single strands cross and quarrel. Streams and jets of breath ooze from him, confuse his horrid imprecations. Breaking his curses to bits, he kicks, lashes, flails as a mill, kicking.

Then Ludek stops.

And Laughing-eyes,
Laughing-eyes? ? ?

He stops, his shadow crouching beneath his feet. As strangely, as quietly as he had begun. Stops. Looks around. The incredible ire is faded. Ludek stands mutely—his arms at his sides; weary. Yes, his eyes are calm; a shell of fluid cups them, a wisp of greyish furry hair limply conceals his left lid. Bewildered, he stands. The wings of his nose glisten with perspiration. His mouth has wrenched itself wide, the lips thrust into a livid cuneiform; and needling between them—a sharp gleaming tooth. Eye-tooth?

? No more laughter,
Laughing-eyes?

Quite calmly, Ludek embraces the situation. At once he recognizes the trouble. A nib. Of course, a nib. Nib. And Ludek starts to calculate, his breath calm.

Where can that nib be?

Ludek ponders. He knows his memory is superb, and he cannot account for the lack of that nib. Distinctly, he recalls arranging the wares on the Stationery shelf. First, he had deposited the many grades of envelopes—all of them. On the upper rows. Beneath these, as was only natural, the packages of sheeted paper. And finally, on the three bottom tiers, had he stored odds, ends, and annoyances: rulers, pencils, clips, erasers, and, he is sure, a small box of nibs. But these nibs are obviously gone, and Ludek reconstructs finely.

Let him see.

Let him.

Let.

Greenishly, a promising thrill starts to brew in Ludek. Ah. Yes. Of course! The hue of the thrill deepens; scampering rat-like down his spine, changing to a shudder. Of course! Deliciously, a vermicular incision cuts into Ludek's tissues. Yes, the cellar.

The Cellar.

Of course, for all his stock is there, nibs too; and timid fear guides its scalpel into his yearning arms. Faint anxiety follows.

For Ludek will visit the cellar.

To get a nib?

To get a nib.

Almost on the tips of his toes, Ludek turns around. Staring, his eyes breathe and unbreathes. He slants past the counter quietly, and crawls along the corridor leading to his living hole.

It is all very dark. Hardly any light reaches into this tubular hallway, and Ludek gropes a little with his hands as he proceeds. But his eyes pry into the darkness, and there, yes, is the trap-door, cut like a slab into the floor. He makes out the rung, gleaming with gathered light, and then, bending over, his legs forming a triangle, he swings open the leaf of the door—just as he would cut a pack of cards: with several fingers. Then he looks down densely, his heart clenching his breast. Moist and delightfully cool, come caressive tongues of air: grey air, curling.

Ludek sets a foot on the first stair, and then withdraws it, re-

flecting. Light? Due to his fine memory he knows at once his recourse.

A crooked finger reaches up, plucks the lip of switch on the wall above, weak illumination rebounding from the walls of the cavity below.

Ludek walks down the skeletal stair-work; with neat steps, faultless. The bannister-less stairs, erected years ago by an Old Carpenter, plunge long tombs to the floor, crossing one another grotesquely; impinging upon the wall elongated figures, mirrored. The separate boards are rough, light streams through the tiny wooden hairs on the trodden surfaces, revealing a measurement in black chalk, marked once by the Carpenter, but since grey with the tiny fingers of dust and broken days.

At first Ludek's mouth tilts with some dejection; but, as he descends closer to the stone floor, fine styluses of light from his pupils stencil once more the cuneiform: with sharp vengeance, and a deep smear. The shattered pout bares a tooth like a white gash. Ludek nears the level.

The cellar is low, with an air about it of descent, and set up with ill-built tables which Ludek uses for counters. Vaguely, one end is larger than the other, the cell tapering greyly, criss-crossed with a web-work of iron plumbing. Behind the bannister, meters tick. In one juncture there is small coal bin, a broken shovel leaning on the partly opened door. Adjacent, set directly into a second juncture, a large ice-box waits, where Ludek keeps, among other things, his meats. The floor is cracked and filthy; and a small bulb burns brownishly at the end of two twisted wires which resemble a caduceus. The walls, expanding from the floor, form badly white-washed ledges, grey with discarded webs and a mossy fungoid growth. The ledges crowd into one another; and just above, on either side, a window leers—the first of which is shattered utterly, the remaining glass missing a bite in one corner; both windows are framed by hidden green screens. The whole oblong cell, ill-lit, sunken, throws impossible shadows and listens.

Ludek's image, descending from the walls, meets him as his feet strike stone. He halts.

His ears feel very cool, blue veins revealed. Acute silence pours into them. Ludek listens. Listen. Then his eyes snap out blindly, groping for the bounding creature in the corner. Rat! Black and hideous feet make sickening leaps across the floor. Disappear behind the shovel.

Ludek is enthralled.

Slight scratchy noises move in his throat; vigor bleeds through his arms. He has lifted his claws and they dangle now from his wrists, the separate fingers curled and arching inward. His ears, narrowing alertly, sort out noises behind the ice-box. Close to the left shelf, against the ledge.

Noises.

Toward this locality, Ludek moves. His eyebrows quaver; his cheeks convulse with pleasure, the heaping flesh crowds into his spectacles, almost interring them. He crosses, his footsteps crackling on the stone.

His objective, he is sure, is in the left bench, touching the ledge. He is certain, his eyes thick with anticipation, his mouth parted. And the quest will be at an end. At an end! Elated, he finishes the last few steps in jerks, spasms.

Here, at last, is the bench. Relieved and joyful, Ludek leans upon the dusty carpentry. Beneath it, a shadow swims. Ludek's claws tremble on the bench, his arms are taut, his shoulders bent and shaking. His mouth is helpless. Ludek's tongue grazes his dangerous teeth. On the fractured scratch of lips, a tiny sliver of blood spurts. Crudely, the dark tongue brushes it off.

Ludek stands thus, forming a mesmerized bow over the frame-work, his spine curved way over his head, the tiny skull hidden between the shoulders. The glasses are gone; eyes, perpetually startled, shift and dash from floor to roof to window. He is darker, wrinkled, in the questionable dusk. He winks futilely, he squints; torturous yearns pound his temples, his armpits, the roots of his spine. Slow fire twisting, fashioning his vertebrae,

pouring laceration into his brain and the yellow liquid of his blood, injecting poisons, shudders into his cells, touching the cords of his being with flame.

Then Ludek slips to his knees.

A distorted mass, he fumbles through boxes—flapping with his dark crushed claws at the sturdy cardboards. Wildly, and then more slowly, he thrusts his arms and fingers into cartons, his nose close to the floor, his moustache stammering. A smell overwhelms him, the cloying, draping odor, faintly remembered. Marvelously clear it mixes strange ingredients in him. He scratches, scratches. At the bench, the floor, the boxes, his shoulders touching. His beard has grown in plainly on a jaw that slopes and alters each instant. His spine twists, swells, discolouring, spraying him with pain, stamping his body to the floor, where it writhes, and moans, and lashes its arms and legs, the jeweled figures of its eyes lit, exultant with joy. Joy! Joy! His face mired with darkness, Ludek grovels and curls. Twisting! Squirming! A crushed caterpillar. From the dark clot of his wound, glued hideously to the earth, his legs are wrung from him, clattering and clawing into the wide white air.

And then the cellar
rose upon its belly,
and began to scream.

Screaming!
Screaming!
Screaming!

Poisonously waving! Through wild windows, cateleptically crying! Lashing and snarling cat-like at shapeless Ludek! And wailing, whining, wailing.

!CAT!

Quaking, Ludek is on his feet. Furry, boiling man. Face con-

torted. Blue Terror leaves him decayed, putrescent. His limbs crawl liquidly, masses of slime. Torrents of fire feed upon his skull, rhyming with the icy stupefaction that consumes his spine. Moustache writhes! And Ludek vomits his spleen to the stench of the cat, wailing at the window.

Then, the fibres of his limbs contracting into vicious spasms, he hops toward the light. A dark claw—hairy, shrunken—reaches high, and with a quick darting motion, curled fingers turn the bulb.

Darkness finds them from the roof.

Darkness, like the widowed spider.

Silence once more. Seeping Silence. Steaming from walls and floors. Mantled in themselves, single objects drop their forms, writhing for gay pleasure, undraped. Lifting lightly the soft sadness of themselves, they stand, revealed. With all their quiet knowledge, and their laughing eyes. Behind the ice-box? Noises. Making hooks into the dark deception. Then the square of a window emerges, cutting through the night a wasted ray. Climbing, gladly, to the floor. Spilling its meagre glance, unwanted. Afterwards, that certain light that grows from Darkness bleeds through, dull instrument, scraping solid shadows from the necromantic block. More profusely, it pours, expands, covering the floor, remote, and the drifted walls. And that? Against the ledge? Brushing through the clinging grey threads of rotted webs?

A man. Man? A little man, scarcely half his sunlight size, who carries arms and wristless hands, as though picking uncertain steps, secretly. His profile, caught into the sides of gloom, is peaked and pointing, grotesquely. There is no chin. And beneath the fantastically long nose, several sensitive wires express themselves with agitation. Who? What?

Ludek?

It cleaves to the wall, its tiny eyes splendid as wondrous sands of fine-flung snow. Closely, it twists and turns its body, closely.

GEDANKEN

Grasping, it tries the wall, here and there, clinging. Arching its spine, it shrinks together, folding its embryonic members in a gargoyle strut. As on a tight rope, it hangs to the ledge, moving to measured music, monstrosly. No neck. And its little feet, hidden, clutch the cracks, the crevices, the winding lanes, the weary rose, and laughing-eyes, laughing-eyes, laughing-eyes.

And now Mr. Ludek did what he had been waiting to do for a long, long time.

(He fell down on all fours and made for a corner, squeaking)

Laughing-eyes, Laughing-eyes,
Are you laughing,
Laughing-eyes?

Laughing! Laughing! Laughing!
Laughing-eyes!

AMERICA, INC.

J. CALDER JOSEPH

THE PRAYER: Let me lie down in America. Let me lie in the silent cotton beds. Let me sleep in the mud bunks of Her Rivers. Let me rest on the tree hammocks. Yes, let me lie down in America and awaken somewhere in Her arms.

Let me wallow, drunk with her wine, in the gutters of her pulse. Let me lean on her lampposts and be washed alive by their light. Let me swim nakedly in her life sea, and find a shore to suck a new breath in to last me down the years. Let me drug myself with the songs of her street corners, her operas, her radios, her jukes, her tree sighs, her wind calls, her night voices, her storm symphonies, and her bird calls.

Let my hands put one brick in her city; let them stretch one wire across her space; let them drive one nail into her barns; let them pull one lump of coal out of her womb; let them filter one nugget of gold out of her streams; let them raise one flag over her towers; let them put one pipe in her underground; let them sink one well in her stomach; let them drive one stake into her spine; let them put one window into her eyes; let them haul one ship into her ports; let them put one block into her dams; let them hook one cable to her bridges . . .

Let them find work in her bigness . . .

* * *

HERE, under the huge wind-drummed tent, the brass liquid boxer. Heaven's fastest child, copper whirlpool. Product, by-product of the dark singers, of the shingled house, of the pot-bellied stove. Black fist singer, here's your crowd, here's your blue-smoked arena, here's your pink-jowled manager with the derby, and the big cigar, moving up and down, across your body,

a graph, *that's my boy, out, in, down, up, in, up, down, across.* Here's the soaked dollars piled high in your sweat: sucker money, sharp money, sure money, toy money, joy money. Here's the sawdust sprouting ticket stubs, pop bottles, chewing gum, matches. The kiss of leather on the face, the round dark head bobbing. The curled brass stance, the long, snarling punch into the white rock. The blood gushing from the white rock. Out of the open mouths, the bellowing symphony, growing, growing. Singer, here's your jungle, here's the wind-drummed tent calling your dark brothers, here's what was made when the black mountainous breasts were turned on like faucets, here's the bread your father dug out of stone. Here's the punch, here's the leather-capped brass driving through the smoke, and here's the whiskey of your dreams, screaming, calling your name, singing the tears crying out of your black body, here's the camera mouths drinking up your brass action . . . here's the crowd bawling, Hello Singer!

* * *

This was the thing the siren shrieked over the cobblestones. This was the thing the snaking steel whipped on the bones of iron stretched across the sky. This was the thing of the tin lunch pail, the brick-dust shirt, the mud-caked overalls, the hard raw hands. Acrobat, slapping bricks on the skeleton, magician crawling on the narrow iron bridges, cable swinger, 175 pounds of human skill. They had the blue-prints, they had the plans, they had the money, and they needed these singers to make a tall thing scrape the sky. Here was the idle crowd watching; the crowd of soft grey hats, green hats, brown hats, black hats, caps, the hatless crowd. Yes, here they were watching the monkeys in the big free circus, slapping bricks on iron, and spitting cement in between them. This one the siren wailed for was one from the long rows of houses, all with the same wash, all with the same garbage, all with the same underwear porch sitters, all with the same heavy women, all with the same thin pretty girls in black dresses, all

with the same dreams, need, human want. This singer designed by God to have red laughter in his veins, liquid steel in his bones to wind him around sky towers, to grab bricks and straw from the rope elevators. This was the one they gave the machine gun riveter to, told him to punch bolts in their blue-prints, 700 feet above the earth. This was the one they took the brain out of, and told him to think of nothing but getting it done. This was the one who spun out, away from the iron bones, who thought of his red wine, the long hard bread, the thick seasoned meat, who passed his sons as he hurled towards the street. This was the one the men in white looked at, shaking their heads, and loaded into an ambulance, mashed, drained bloodless, cryless, brainless . . . this was 175 pounds of human skill and for this the siren shrieked, Hello Singer!

* * *

He stands under a twenty-five watt bulb, washing the underground city off his hands. These two hands, these two bruised singers have come from the stuff of working in rock. Around his neck are the instructions, the fate stabbed into metal, IF I AM TAKEN ILL. *Ill* is no word for it, *ill* does not come near it. Not for that snaking convulsion that will slip through his lungs and veins, and hurl him, gasping, to the pavement of shoppers. It would be better to say, IF THE DEATH THAT I CARRY IN MY BODY GETS HOLD OF MY BRAIN. They call him, Sand Hog. He makes roads through rivers. They fight water with stone, and through long tubes spiraling through the water, breath is given to them. His whole working body expresses FORWARD. He leans into the pneumatic drills. There's no crowd down there, there's no cheering, there's no brass-tongued band exciting the blood. There's just FORWARD and the cold mathematics of artificial breath. There's the powdered confetti of the torn stone, though; there's the raw music of air-chewing rock; there's the slap and throb of the water; there's the bright rhapsody of white tile going off into cylindrical eternity. There's the steel-helmeted workers climbing

out of the earth, and the girl behind the long counter, putting down steaming coffee, and a platter of thick steak, saying, Hello Singer!

* * *

In the noisy tavern, this one slumps over the smudgy keyboard, pounding out song. It's an upright, there's a glass of beer on top, no head on it. There's a cigarette in his mouth, wet, unlit; he's busy now, composing Heaven for people who go out looking for it every night. He doesn't use music, he doesn't have to: he's blind; but he's seeing more of life than anybody in the place. Now, the white-spread claw comes down, the right hand tickles the keys. He's got it, he's got the thing his brain has been looking for. He takes a gulp of the flat beer, a match comes up to the cigarette. The people stop talking, the bartender stops polishing the bar, the black cat curls around his feet. The drunk at the end of the bar brings the back of his dirty hand across his eyes. The fingers begin to go, his head and shoulders lean towards his hands. It's *Somebody Loves Me*, and there isn't a radio singer, a five thousand-a-week pianist in the country that can do to that number what he's doing to it. He's making it live and breathe for six minutes, and it doesn't cost those people anything to go to Heaven with the blind key tickler. He ends it, he looks around; it's all right that he's blind, he knows what's on those faces. He takes another gulp of beer, he mashes his cigarette. The people start clapping, and the clapping grows, it falls off the walls, it seems to be the only thing in the place. A girl is sitting at the far end of the place. She has a cheap red dress on; he goes straight over there. Then she looks deeply into those sightless eyes and, in a throaty voice, she says, Hello Singer!

* * *

The jobs are nailed up on white cards. Scrawled hope, challenge, work, food. They stand there in the crowd's movement,

waiting for the white challenge to be nailed up. ELECTRICIAN WANTED: That is it, that is what he has been waiting for: this wire surgeon in a two-colored suit, with rundown black shoes, resoled inside with cardboard. His knowledge is the pure knowledge of working with a thing; he knows batteries, coils, fuses, rheostats, thermostats, wires, insulation. Because there were fifty-six men standing there at eight o'clock that morning with the same cold knowledge that was frozen into his brain, fifty-six men who, by the coincidence of excruciating hunger and fear formed a broken phalanx into the office where the unusual opportunity was being offered at the unusual salary of six dollars a week. And because of that phalanx which had the same pure knowledge as he did, he took the job of garbage collector. Those fifty-six swimmers did not drown, and this one found a piece of driftwood in the most treacherous sea of all, the sea of life. From the shore, which is deep in the West, there is a little house where an aged mother and father stand, watching the sun sink into the Western Hills, hearing the trains hooting the call the young men answer to, and from that porch they stand, looking to the East, and call: Hello Singer!

* * *

Yes, Singer, this is your place. This is your fulfillment. In the streets selling the sheeted murder, rape, arson. We have seen you, Singer, in the ragged blue shirt, under the lamp, wet, grimy, bellowing. We have seen your bold defiance of hunger, your cold lips, your frozen hands and we have hailed you.

Yes, air man, by your pursuit of the cold star paths, by letting rain and hail bounce off your wings, by the throbbing pulse under the hood, they have made you, Singer.

Yes, you in the boxed room, in the hot factory, in the dark mines, and you in the haunted forest of war, we salute you, Singer.

Yes, you shoveling red coals of speed into the ship's furnace, you mastering the wheel of travel in the roaring bus, you driving

red engines to the tongues of flame, you on the long trek with the sealed mercy, you in the lighthouse signalling man's brotherhood to man, you in the hospital shooting sleep into the tortured arm, you in the cold whistling wilds engaged in manhunt, you on the storm-wrenched poles mending the arteries of electricity, and you signalling distress from a watery tomb: the world hears you, and calls you: Singer!

* * *

Name: Stinky, Gyp, Punchy. Occupation: Dice, beer, girls, protection mobster. Born between the hours of three and four, under the black blanket of the night, born with a policeman as midwife, born near the lines of sagging wash, born with a kettle hissing, born with a shriek, born to live, to fight his way out of a boxed room.

Milked, clothed, turned loose to steal, eat, live, want, have, have not, need, want, get, need get . . . Saw stars in a girl's face, blew them out with a savage kiss.

Took on padded shoulders, green, purple suits, took on a blue sapphire, wore it on his left hand. Scar over the right eye, two teeth missing, weight 165, and living . . .

Heard in the midnight to curse hunger, the ache of his muscles. Heard to weep and crush his tears in his hands. Stood half naked under the hot sun, drove a pickaxe into the earth, drank out of a horse trough. Took the hot anger of his soul to a girl named Billy, named Irene, named Winnie. Hunted sweetness in a joy girl's room. Said, ME. Hunted a meaning in the darkness, watched a candle flicker, heard the drip of its wax tears, heard a phonograph playing, I LOVE YOU TRULY.

Lived as the clocks chewed the black of night, lived as the clocks hurled their avalanche of time over him, lived in a rented room while a yellow light watched over his sickness, lived in the red, bawling impact of the strike district, lived on a park bench with the smoky beacon of a dying cigarette, saying *alive*. Time:

12:02. Alive: with no feeling, with no heed, no hunger, no thirst, alive with nothing but a sick river of blood sleeping in his body. Alive. Time 12:02.

Skull opened. Bullet removed, one minute, two minutes. Me . . . a thread on a silver instrument. Me . . . a brain collapsed with ether. Me . . . jobless, broke, bitter, accused. Found? Sprawled on an emergency table. Me . . . listening to an ether voice, saying, *Punchy, get up. For Christ's Sakes . . . get up!* DON'T LET HIM KILL YOU. GET UP PUNCHY AND KNOCK THE HELL OUT OF THE BASTARD! *Come on, Gyp, we'll hit Mr. Morris for a grand . . . he's afraid of us, Gyp . . . and he loves that kid of his . . . he'll pay up . . . Come on Gyp, let's roll . . . Come on, let Stinky play! C'mon let the Stinker have the bat!*

Punchy's blood is running out into a gauze coffin. Gyp's twisted mouth is a white razor blade of pain. Stinky's soul is struggling out of a bony prison.

* * *

Flop House: Sleep for Sale: 15 Cents . . . Goodnight deaf stone, goodnight, deaf, wet pavements, goodnight deaf world, goodnight deaf City . . . And the long sickness becomes a part of his bones, and his soul becomes a part of the night-splashed stones; the heart becomes a hammer nailing him to the night of the lost; the hands are huge, brainless paws that swing at his side, detached, workless, homeless, useless; the lungs become a mechanical bellows, blowing out the nothingness of his body, sucking in the hollowness of the night; the breath becomes a cold wind that twists through his body with the fury of a hurricane. He looks up at the sign, the wind creaks it, and it is like a shriek in his brain; he looks into the yellow lit hall . . . he looks at the two coins, saying, "Here, I want to flop . . .

" . . . you sleep don't you Charlie? Don't you Ben? You sleep, don't you Frank, Jack, Bill? Jesus, what else can you do? You can't go back and you can't go ahead; you can't die and you can't

live, you can't work and you can't stop looking, you can't think and you can't stop thinking . . . You want to pound the goddamn green walls; you want to smash the swinging yellow light; you want to shriek out of the darkness to your home which isn't there anymore, to the woman who doesn't care anymore . . . You think of the jobs you had, you think of the lay-offs, you think of the butts you fell on, you think of the smoke that put your guts to sleep, and you hiss through your teeth, Jesus, God, let me go to sleep . . . I paid that sonofabitch fifteen cents for it, didn't I?" The clock ticks, the slow wind moves the light back and forth, back and forth.

Outside the sign keeps on creaking, the policeman goes by, the cat curls in the yellow-lit hall. The snoring grows louder; it merges into a frightening, single sound . . . something like the sound of fog horns on the River, calling, *lost, lost, lost* . . .

* * *

Yesterdays: Where are you now, green and red spinning tops? Have you finally whirled into the dark corridors of time? Have you spun with your wooden brains into the folds of yesterday? Are you black ashes in the city dumps? Where are you desks, pock-marked with the initials, K. L., P. G., F. T.? Who slaves over you laboriously now, employs a stubby pencil, writing 2 plus 5 is 7. *Teacher is dumb*. Are you splinters in the fathomless depths of yesterday? Are you part of a ramshackle house in the mountains? Are you ashes in the city dumps?

And you Pauline, with the gold pig tails . . . are you loved, hated or damned? Perhaps you are dead. But could anything with such a wild spring of life in it be dead? Could those little round legs be still in the earth? No longer running? No longer dancing? Could that bubbling laugh suddenly stop and creep out into the darkness of the fields? Are you swallowed somewhere, Pauline? In the city? In the hospital, content smelling ether, jabbing arms, starched, and efficient? Are you haunting

the city streets, pale, painted? Are you living in a home with a white fence around it? In an institution with a black fence around it? Do you remember Pauline being alive long ago?

Have the bike riders found the hill too steep? Have they gone hurtling into the valley? Has the charging football team finally struck the unseen walls ahead?

* * *

The People: Me, I smelled America. I smelled it in the iron that flowed in the bridges; I smelled it in the white breath of a train going to California; I smelled it creeping out of the wooden lungs of hoes; I smelled it in the black wires that strung the voices of the people across the States. I smelled it coming out of a piano at 2 A. M.

I smelled it and my lungs grew big with it; it filled the wells of my soul; it roared up into my brain and became a part of me. It ripped open the throbbing doors of my heart, and said, *I belong here.*

And in my throat there was a song that only whirling saws, motors, gears, pistons, wires, beacons, tractors and a piano playing at 2 A. M. could say.

The things my blood had hunted for so long were here; I was a friend of the ship that ploughed black waters; I was a friend of the policeman going alone into the dark alley. I was a friend of all those who stood on the moon washed corners. I was a friend of them.

Because I had known pain, the guts of the little boy under the truck wheels were my guts, the cry of the mother was my cry: this boy was my boy. I was his father. Because I had known an anger, the fist of the striker was my fist, and what contentment his bloody hand found on the strike-breaker's face, was my contentment, was my expression of what had coiled in my brain.

FRIMMEL'S SUCCESSOR

MEYER LIBEN

I SUPPOSE if I were a little keener I should have been able to see that new things were in the air, that new combinations, so to speak, were forming and reforming. I came into the office and sat down at my desk—the little ceremonials, the minute little actions that one picks up on the way, and is really not aware of until he sees somebody else at work, I will not mention. I forbear. Everything was as usual, things were quite in order, and I picked up where I had left off yesterday.

The most characteristic thing about work of this sort is that you are never finished with it and can never hope to be finished with it as long as you live. It is a fact that when you die, the work is unfinished, there are bills to be sent out, books are not balanced, and it is for this reason that when I see a young man come into the office and begin to work like mad so as to finish this bit of work by the end of the week or by the end of the month, I cannot help thinking that this young man does not see it all clearly enough; when he comes to realize that the work will at any rate be unfinished when he dies, perhaps he will not be so eager about it. Of course there is the question of advancement, and you will see in a moment why I have raised this problem.

My immediate superior had as yet not arrived. There is no point in making a melodrama out of this either—in fact he was never to arrive; at this moment, when I was sitting at my desk, he was dead at home. However, I did not know this, I am generally one of the earliest to arrive, he generally came a little later, and by that time the six people in his department were all busy at work.

I was caught up in my work in a little while, or better, my work caught me up in it, and I hardly heard when my name was called out; there is a simple reason for this, in the office there were only a certain number of noises that I had come to recog-

nize, only a certain number of people had occasion to call me and it was not so much my name that I recognized as the particular inflections, the intonations of the people who were calling me. The boss himself was calling me. He had actually come into the office where I worked, or more precisely, he was standing at the door, and he had already called out my name two or three times before I became aware of the fact that I was being addressed.

"What is the matter with you?" he asked, "are you deaf?"

I admit that I was astonished at this question—I thought it very unbusinesslike, he looked like a drug store lounge there, leaning against the door, and hardly like the president of such a large business organization.

"Come into my office," he said to me, "I have something to tell you."

I followed him into his office, this was the first time in years that I had stepped foot into it, there was simply no reason for me to be there. You can imagine that I was a little surprised at this request. I could not understand what it was that he wanted from me, it was somehow outside the sphere of normal relations. Yet I was not at all thrilled—if anything I was a little perturbed. I will not say that I thought myself to be in any danger from the point of view of tenure, my conscience in this respect was clear, I felt that nobody would be able to perform my tasks any better than I was able to perform them—and yet there is no question but that somewhere at the bottom of my mind there was a very uncomfortable stirring, there was surely some submerged fear at work.

He did not bother to ask me to take a seat.

"You know," he said, "that Frimmell is dead."

This last word galvanized me—it sounded so out of place, it shook me up a little. I began to see that I was in an unusual situation.

"Dead," I repeated. "How is that possible? He was here, at work, only yesterday."

As soon as I spoke this sentence, I saw the folly of it, and I sensed immediately the content and the tone of the answer that the boss would give me. What in the world made me say such a stupid thing, I asked myself, I hurt myself in asking it, I suffered for my recognized stupidity.

"Yes," answered the boss, "he was here yesterday, but he is dead today. Is there anything so strange about that?"

To a T. Just the answer I had expected.

I admit that it all sounds heartless—here my immediate superior was dead, by no means an old man, a man with whom I had had the most intimate contact over a period of eighteen years, and I could only think that I had said the wrong thing, the stupid thing, that I had opened myself up for this curt response. I thought not one bit of Frimmell, I thought only of my humiliation, and I cursed myself for having uttered this perfectly ridiculous cliché.

"You will step into his place," he went on, "you will take over all his responsibilities, and naturally your salary will be increased accordingly."

I was about to answer him, accepting his offer with thanks, telling him that I was ready to step into poor Frimmell's shoes, but just then the telephone rang and he waved away the beginning of my sentence. Then he seemed to forget all about me as he engaged in a heated telephone conversation, it was just as though Frimmell had not died and as though I was not in the room at all.

I was grateful for the opportunity to collect myself—the rudeness no longer disturbed me actively, I had long grown used to the fact that there is an automatic rudeness towards the person in the inferior position, that when a more important person enters the scene, you are automatically relegated to the periphery of the world, you have entered the further sphere of the boss's consciousness. I say I no longer *actively* resented this rudeness, how can you continue to grow angry over an inevitable part of your daily routine, one doesn't have the courage, the strength, for this.

Do you know that I felt much closer to my employer at this

instant, with the rudeness and all? It was a simple matter of gradation of rank, I had risen in the ranks, I was one step nearer to the top of the organization, I really did feel a slight swelling of self-importance, it was a feeling that I had not felt in years, ever since my childhood, perhaps. There was an occasion that I now recalled, however vaguely, it was the first time that I had ever thought of it. It was in elementary school, some classroom, an election, I was suddenly made a member of a committee (say, could it have been a practical joke?). I only got the effect of how it lifted me, how I suddenly felt myself wrenched from the classroom community, somehow set above it, a little superior even, I was closer somehow to the president of the class, to the vice-president, to the teacher, it had been a very pleasant feeling, I do not remember how it turned out, how long this feeling of pleasure had lasted. At that time I even thought that utter strangers looked at me with more regard, it was as though the news of my election to the classroom committee had gotten into the streets.

"My dear man you are dreaming," my employer said to me. He had finished his telephone conversation. I believe it was the first non-commercial remark he had ever addressed to me.

"Poor Frimmell," I said.

"Do you know," my employer said to me, leaning forward in his chair, "do you know that he was a fine fellow, we will all miss him a great deal?"

He then gave me some instructions, which I listened to with great care, but which, when you come down to it, were quite beside the point—what he was telling me I already knew, the instructions covered the general duties of the deceased, what I had to know my employer was really in no position to tell me. The special ways of doing the job which one only learns by doing the job. It was all very business-like—a new job, a new man for the job, new duties had to be learned. Life goes on, I thought to myself, I indulged in this bit of philosophy.

As soon as I left the boss's office (that was a funny handshake

he gave me, as though I were going off on a long journey) my mood changed again—really I have never spent such a confusing day, everything changing from one minute to the next, I am sure you already have an inkling as to why this day has exhausted me so much, nothing is so tiring as to experience too many different emotions in the course of a day.

As soon as I left the office, the practical aspects of the affair began to present completely unforeseen problems. It was a great surprise. All my life, all my working life I mean, I had trained myself, I had been trained, to do the job in front of me, if there was a slight variation in the job, to adjust myself as quickly as possible to the variation. It did not work out that way at all here. I did not simply sit down and take over my new duties. If it had all been so simple, the whole day would not possess the extraordinary vividness which it does possess, it would hardly have lingered in my mind past the office hours.

What exactly was the difficulty? Now that I am able to see things from a slight vantage point, not much of a vantage point it is true, a few hours and a new location, I think I see what the difficulty was. I was really a split man—while officially, legally, so to say, I was in a new position, comparatively speaking, in a position of authority, in fact, psychologically, I was still in my old post. Is it not perfectly evident that it should have worked out this way, would it not happen to almost anybody under the same circumstances? Of course it would, it is all a matter of habit, you change your patterns of habit, and then you are on a spot for a while, you can't adjust yourself, you continue with the old ways in the new position. Consider a child who is learning to walk; doesn't that child often succumb to the temptation of crawling? Of course, why talk about it?

In fact, what gives point to today's experiences, what makes them, I mean, so memorable (such a recent occurrence, and already memorable?) is not their unusualness, but rather the degree of intensity with which these experiences struck me, that is what the whole thing is all about.

Furthermore, I have begun to see that there is something very cowardly in assuming that such and such an experience is not so remarkable for the reason that so many people have shared it, this strikes me somehow as an attempt to share the guilt, you bring into the picture a whole crowd of people who do not belong there at all, you somehow lose yourself in this crowd you have summoned, it is the way that people are relieved at the prospect of death—if they are—when they reflect that this is a fate shared by all humanity.

At any rate, when I left my employer's office, I really began to have my troubles, there is no question of it.

I had to take instructions from people I had never taken instructions from before, I had to give instructions to people I had never given instructions to before. Do you know that the latter was the more difficult for me, that I find it very trying to give instructions to the people with whom I have worked together, on the same plane, for so many years?

"Here," I said to an old fellow clerk, "do so and so."

How easy it sounds! and yet it cost me an effort to get these words out, I somehow did not want to feel more important than these others, in fact I think I was a little afraid to give them orders. Isn't it a peculiar thing, though? Like most people, I believe that I want power, that I want to be in the position to rule, to control others, and here, when I was given this opportunity to some extent, I shied away from it, I suddenly became very tender, very squeamish.

What in the world were you afraid of? I see the perfect reasonableness of such a question. After all, you may say, you were not sending these people on any dangerous errands, it is not as though you were risking their lives through foolhardiness of your own, no, not at all, you were simply telling them to do what they had been told to do for years, what they expected to be told to do.

That is all very well, I understand that, and yet there is no question in my mind but that I feared for my life, I really felt

somehow that I would be physically annihilated for daring to assume the robes of power, for playing this commanding role.

It was all very shocking to me, but please do not think that there was no element of pleasure in this new role that I found myself playing, please do not think that I got no sense of power in watching people carry out the instructions that I gave to them, please do not think that I am so inhuman. Of course, there was pleasure in it for me, after all were they not forced to do what I had been forced to do for so many years, do you think people have no need to inflict on others the humiliations that have been inflicted on them?

It was precisely this combination of fear and pleasure that drove me frantic, the combination of feelings was really a little too much for me, I must confess that.

When it came to the taking of orders from a new superior, there were further difficulties. I'm used to taking orders, but do you know that the fear element in my new commanding role somehow re-enforced my own rebelliousness, so that I adopted an attitude towards my new superior that I had never dared adopt towards the unfortunate Mr. Frimmell.

Really, this new superior of mine, this Mr. Rankin, infuriated me with the manner in which he gave his orders, with his curt-ness and his air of self-importance. He treated me in a way that Mr. Frimmell had never treated me, he made my subordinate relation to him very keenly felt, it seemed as though this is just what he wanted to do. I am sure that he asked me to carry out orders not because it was essential that they be carried out, but rather because he wanted to show his power over me.

Do you want to know what I thought? I thought that this Mr. Rankin had divined my fears in regard to my own powers, and was purposely bringing these fears out, underlining these weaknesses of mine by emphasizing his own sense of power, his own ability to *use* that power.

He must have noticed some rebelliousness on my part, because at one point during the day he said:

"My dear man, what seems to trouble you? You seem not at all anxious to carry out your new tasks."

He said this in an insufferable way, I did not have the courage to respond to him in kind, but merely took out my resentment on him inwardly for hours afterwards. You would think that I would descend on my own subordinates with fury, but I did not. I really feared to do such a thing.

There is no question in my mind but that my subordinates have nothing but the greatest contempt for me, I could see it all day in their eyes, I could see them comparing me to Mr. Frimmell, he was a much more confident person, even more aggressive.

Even when I attempted to act a little more brusquely, with a little more authority, even then, though they carried out my instructions, they did these tasks with a certain air of slyness, as though they were saying: "We must do what he says, but we can see right through him."

And this Mr. Rankin—don't think that he wasn't always around just at the moment when one of my orders was carried out in this really contemptuous way, he was always situated most advantageously at these moments, and he seemed to have an understanding with these subordinates of mine, it was an understanding which excluded me, they all of them were laughing at me, there is no question of it.

I will never allow this any more—I will act with becoming dignity henceforth to this Mr. Rankin, I will go about my business with him in a very—business-like way, I will show him my true feelings, but I will have control over them, he is nothing but a boor at any rate, as for his wife's unfaithfulness to him, it is a matter of common gossip. And I will show a stronger hand to my subordinates; one day's nonsense of this sort is really enough for any man, it is ridiculous to believe that they will do me any harm, who are they anyway, most ordinary kind of people, they don't have the courage for an act of violence, they fear the law as much as I do.

But enough of such thoughts—they are of no earthly use, they only have the effect of inflaming me, of filling me with desires for revenge, and I know how miserable, how cowardly it makes me feel when these vaguely thought feelings of revenge are not put into practice, when I only hope to put them into practice, but do not really decide to do so. Yes, I am a great coward, I know that, the fact that I am always thinking in terms of revenge, that I cannot stop myself from thinking in such terms, proves that, it is simply that my thinking takes the place of acts, and with so little satisfaction.

Yes, it was my cowardice which was the cause of all my troubles today, thank God I have something to blame it on—and I do not know yet how I succeeded in getting out of that office without collapsing altogether.

Do you know that for as long as half an hour I sat and did nothing but regret the death of Mr. Rankin, that is, Mr. Frimmell, nothing but regret that I was not back at my old work, that work the monotony of which seemed at some times the most unendurable thing in the world, but to which one gets used in the same way that one's body gets used to an increasing dose of some poison.

In the evening, I went out to dine in one of the two or three restaurants I frequented. As I sat there it was very clear that I could not act as though this were the end of an ordinary working day, that I simply could not go through the usual pattern once again. But what to do?

When you come to think of it, there is really very little to do when you have the feeling that you ought to do something special. I decided to visit a friend, he lived with his wife in a downtown apartment, I do not think I had ever visited him before this way, in the middle of the week, without making an appointment. What was it that motivated me? Simply the desire to explain myself, to get a little sympathy perhaps, in a way the most reasonable thought I had had all day.

On the way from the subway to my friend's apartment, it was

necessary to pass along a narrow poorly lit street, quite a phenomenon of a street in our city. A most acute and unpleasant feeling now came over me—yes, it was as sudden as that, though I admit that the groundwork for such an acute unpleasant feeling had been nicely laid by the events of the day (and why not, while I am at it, of my whole life?) In fine, I fancied myself the murderer of Frimmell. Just like that—his murderer, nothing else, mind you. I was responsible for his no longer being in the office, I had put him out of the way.

Naturally I did all in my power to push such a tormenting thought out of my mind, but it refused to go—really, I have never had such a stubborn thought—it was as though this thought felt, on its own hook, that it belonged just where it was, and resisted any attempts at being ousted.

This is what the devil said to me:

“You see, you have done it, you have somehow done away with this innocent man, and now that you are in his position, you are quite naturally afraid of your subordinates, afraid that they will do away with you in just the way that you did away with him.”

Can you imagine anything sillier, more idiotic, than such a thought? Ridiculous, I said to myself, there is no foundation to such nonsense, you are making it up out of your own head, but the thought and the guilty feeling attached to it lingered on, I could not shake them off by any amount of counter-thinking or counter-feeling. I went over almost every minute of time I had spent on the day of his death, it was quite clear that I could have had nothing to do with it, that I was not even in any physical proximity to him.

But then what upset me most was when I turned on myself for even attempting this kind of justification, for even attempting to exculpate myself when I was actually guilty of nothing. This infuriated me, it made me turn on myself with savagery, demanding what I meant by such thinking and that I put such imaginings out of my mind immediately.

Up came the office scene, and the attitudes of the subordinates—so this is why they grin at me in such a peculiar way, this is what they are thinking of, that I have done away with Rankin, so this is why they walk around and gloat at me, what in the world will they do to me, what are they not capable of, these smiling men?

You will believe me when I say, that pursued by such thoughts, I ran with the utmost speed to the house where my friend lived, a policeman looked at me, with some suspicion, naturally, and when I finally rang the apartment bell, I was exhausted, terrified, and waiting anxiously for some nice warm living room, where I might sit for a while and chatter the Lord alone knows what.

Pratt seemed to notice nothing strange in my behavior, I am sure he was a little surprised at seeing me, but even this was hard to detect.

"Why, come right in," he said to me, "this is an unexpected visit."

Before I realized what I was about, I had blurted out that Rankin was dead, and that I was in his place. Oh, perhaps there were a few introductory remarks, formal questions about health and so on, I hardly recall, but I know that I wanted sympathy, I wanted to have my fears dispelled, I told about my feelings, oh you can be sure that I said nothing of my suspicions about my own part in the death, I could not get myself to talk about that, but the very fact that I was talking about the subject at all was enough to relieve me somewhat, I did not express everything I was thinking.

What a fool I was! I should have just sat there, and exchanged general information, said that I had been in the neighborhood and thought I would drop in for a call. Then we could have discussed general matters of interest—our mutual friends, the political situation, a thousand and one things.

I think Pratt was sympathetic enough, but that terrible wife of his! Do you know what she thought? She thought that I had

burst in so unexpectedly merely to show off my new position, with its greater position and greater salary, to gloat over her husband, who was little more than a breadwinner.

Though she said nothing directly, her whole attitude was a challenge to me, her whole tone was very belligerent.

Her husband, my friend Pratt, tried to smooth things over, he tried to sympathise with my feelings, he said that I would get used to my new post soon enough, it was only a matter of habit, of adjustment. He congratulated me—I could have had a fine sympathetic time if only that wife had gone off somewhere.

But as things stood, it was I that had to go. It was impossible to stay any longer, really too trying.

He took me to the door and shook hands warmly with me—God knows what he said about me after I left.

I got home as quickly as I could from that visit.

WHOM THE OX GORED

BEN FIELD

EZEKIEL reached his greatest heights in the Latin class.

Larry Brownstein, the soccer player, who had been called on to give the accusative plural of "causae," had just muttered something that sounded perilously like "cow's ass."

The Latin teacher shouted in a stentorian voice, "What was that?"

Up went Ezekiel's hand. "It's biology he's giving us."

Purple-faced, the teacher gave him a zero and dispatched him to the office with a guard of honor while the boys rolled under their desks, howling with laughter.

In the old days a teacher's frown, a mark less than perfect would have worried Ezekiel Cohen terribly. He was fast getting over such childishness. Marks no longer meant anything in his young life. His chief concern these days was to be accepted by the fellows, to become like Larry, like "Trombone" Levy, and the others—big and free and irresponsible.

On his way home after detention, Ezekiel passed the famous hangout, The Academy. At the door stood Larry with a cuestick. He was wearing his lettered sweater, and his black straight hair was slicked back over the firm skull which seemed to be able to head the whole world like a ball.

"Et tu, Zeke? Boy, didn't you give old Chickenlegs a roasting!"

Ezekiel grinned proudly for it was he who had given the Latin teacher the monicker of Chickenlegs.

Larry waved, "So long," and went back to the pool table.

The temptation to stay and watch the star athlete make his startling shots was great, but Ezekiel knew that his father would be furious if he were to arrive at the synagogue one minute late. The old man had to be handled carefully. He flung his books

over his shoulder with a curse, using one of the foulest words in the new vocabulary he had picked up from the big boys.

His mother was alone in the flat in her black dress and wig. "Little father, I was worried. What has kept you?"

He muttered something unintelligible.

"Nu?"

She might just as well be let in on it now because sooner or later they would all have to get used to his taking matters into his own hands.

"That Chickenlegs, that Latin one kept me." His treble voice became thin as if he were squeaking through a quill. "The heck with him!"

"What heck?" She tried to straighten the collar tightened like a bandage around his skinny neck. "Get dressed for the Sabbath. Tell me what this heck is?" she asked fondly.

"May he go to hell!"

"What?" with a sharp intake of her breath. "You must never talk that way about a teacher. God first and then a teacher. You talk like—."

"I didn't talk, I laughed. Is laughing a sin also now? New sins I got to worry about. The old ain't enough."

She dropped her hands from his shoulders as if she had been burned. "Ezekiel, I don't know what is coming over you lately." She sighed. "Come, get dressed, my sleepy angel."

Feeling perverse, he did not change into his other suit, and while she was putting on her coat, he tore the braid off the white Sabbath loaf, dipped it into the pot of hot fat noodle soup, and chewing, followed her.

You had to walk every bit of a mile before you came to the synagogue, a big structure with onion towers and walls yellowed as if the ancient Jews had stood up against them. His mother climbed into the gallery while he slid into a pew in the rear so that his father, who had to pray up front near the Ark close to the owner of the poultry market for whom he worked, might not see him and imagine that he had not yet arrived. Yes, he had

been a fool to delay it; he must start training the old man, too.

The moment services were over, he beat it home to find his newly married sister and his brother-in-law.

"What a wind you made coming in, shrimp." Ike squatted to show how the boy had run in, straining as if he were on the stool.

Ezekiel had resented his sister's marriage. There was no love lost between his brother-in-law and himself. Disappointed because he could not spend a few minutes with himself, Ezekiel cursed him roundly, and then ignored contemptuously his other sallies.

When the old people arrived, his father, the shochet, tramped in first with his short legs and his thunder. "What mad dog had his teeth in your behind, Ezekiel?"

The boy bridled up. "I finished my prayers, then I went. Am I supposed to live in the synagogue, too?"

The shochet turned to the others and showed his chunky bearded hands. "Do you hear how my kaddish, my prayer, talks?"

Ezekiel's sister set the table. "You should of heard him before. I ain't seen a boy change in a couple of months like that. He used to be such a nice kid."

Ike chimed in. "Now he always looks like he done something in his pants. Why, when I was his age I had a job and—."

"All right," Ezekiel's voice shot off key, "all right, I can earn my own living. I'll leave school tomorrow. I'll even be a pinboy in an alley."

"Enough!" The old man turned his smoldering eyes on the mother. "Did you hear? Pinboy! Your American schools. A yeshiva, a house of holy study, wasn't good enough for him. All you were worried about was his health. Health enough to yell and run your crown has until he bursts."

The old woman hastened around the table. "Shah, shah. You look ugly as thirty corpses, my child. Sit down. It is the holy Sabbath."

Ezekiel raised his chin stubbornly, but he allowed her to pull him into the chair, realizing that he dare go no further in his revolt for the present. He shut his eyes which seemed to be full of flies' wings, listened to the grace hurried as if his father were calling the cat. Then everybody became busy with food, and he was let alone.

Supper over, the prayers finally done. As it was Friday night, he could not turn on the radio. As it was Friday night, he could not go into the street. Friday night all he could do was suffer.

The family soon retired. The young couple took the room next to his as was their custom when they came visiting, and the performance began, the kissing, grunting, Ike whistling as if he had beans in his nose.

Ezekiel's inflamed imagination pulled big white Bathsheba from the housetop into his bed. Then he took Esther, annointed with oil of myrrh six months and six months with sweet odors. His heart throbbed painfully, and long before the next room quieted, he felt exhausted and as empty as the date sucked by the saint who had fasted forty days and nights.

The week end was torture. Tired and sullen, he had to spend all Saturday morning once again in the synagogue. There was a confirmation, services were dragged out, he in his corner behind a pillar remembering his bar mitzvah, the stupid speech, everybody handling him like a mazuzah; instead of freedom with manhood, heavier chains.

Saturday dinner was always a long, drawn-out affair at which he stuffed himself, and later while he was struggling against the lotos of temptation in the bathroom, again the call to the synagogue where the old men studied the Mishnah and the Talmud, quoting Rashi, Oonkalas, Akiba, and the other sages; and once more he was compelled to listen to the endless arguments about the sacred citron, the Palestinian palm, the ram's horn, and the gored ox. After study, the evening prayers, his father keeping a sharp eye on him until the stars were out and the market where he worked open for the slaughter of poultry.

Sunday once more to the synagogue with the velvet bag and the phylacteries, thanking the Lord for keeping your pores and other passages of the body sweet and clean and for not having created you a woman. Nevertheless, he envied the girls on whom it was not incumbent to pray endlessly and futilely, who were not driven left and right the days of their life.

Only on his return to school did Ezekiel perk up. He hung around the big boys in the playground and in the lunchroom where they devoured hot dogs with milk as if it were no sin. His crack about biology had made a hit. He got further into Larry's good graces by letting him copy from his paper during a test.

At the end of the third, Chickenlegs handed out poor marks to most of the class. Having accepted his red "D" with a smart-alecky grin which maddened the teacher, Ezekiel marched home and shoved the card under his mother's nose.

She couldn't believe her eyes. "Is it possible? Maybe the man is an anti-Semite."

He shouted, irritably, "That ain't got nothing to do with it!"

"How else can it be?" she groaned.

"I said that ain't got nothing to do with it!"

"Shah, what are you yelling at your mother for?"

"I ain't yelling," he shouted.

"Yelling and jumping from me like a file from a tree."

"I can't breathe. I'm going crazy. From school to synagogue every day, and when it comes Saturday, Sunday, it's even worse. So I can't study. I can't even breathe without saying a blessing."

Stunned, she faltered, "Such words, such talk from a Jewish boy. I pulled it from your father, and you were not sent to study holiness, and now . . ." She appeared frightened, and her long, wrinkled upper lip trembled.

And at last when she signed the card, he knew that the old man would not be told and that he could go ahead full steam with his plans. Only then did he allow his mother to fondle and feed him, forcing a vow out of him that he would do better work.

Ezekiel flaunted his signed card before his classmates. "You

got to know how to talk to your mother, Larry. You got to know diplomacy, coup deetay."

The soccer star was worried that his poor work might bring expulsion from the team.

"My mother, all she said was, 'Sha, shah,' like I was king of the Persians."

Larry grinned down at him. "You sure take the cake, Zeke."

"Sure, and I'll bet you pass this term. I'll see you stay on the team. You sit next to me, and I guarantee you pass every test now."

Larry put his arm around him. "Say, what do you do Saturdays?"

"Go to the synagogue."

"Sundays?"

"Go to the synagogue."

"What in hell you kidding me?"

"I ain't. Go to the synagogue, and you'll see."

"Say, this is America. You ought to tell your old man where to get off."

Ezekiel wagged his head. "I'm educating my mother first. He's next."

"Get him educated fast, and come down to the Academy next Saturday."

He schemed, planned. It worked so well that at noon when his father was napping after the heavy meal, he faked a splitting headache. His mother, taking immediate alarm, palmed his brow, and told him to take the sun until evening prayers.

The boys were in a fast soccer game when he arrived at the field. Larry was the whole show, his legs flashing like steel rods, his shoulders bulging like a centurion's. Ezekiel hung around the gate watching yearningly, wondering with a pang if the time would ever come when he would burst his small ugly skin and take his place amongst these healthy nonchalant fellows.

Trotting across the field, Larry spotted him. "'Lo, Zeke. Glad you're around."

After the game, the team repaired to the Academy where Larry introduced him as "great Caesar's pal, the guy that can make mince meat out of Cicero. Trot out your stuff, fella."

Ezekiel screwed up his face and gave them:

"*'Et ivi hinc ad Agenau
Da wurden mir die Augen blau.
Per te, Wolfgang Angst
Gott gib dass du hangst.
Quia me cum baculo
Percusseras in oculo.'*"

The doggerel was received with acclaim by the Academicians.

It was then that Ezekiel committed his first major sin. Casting his eyes about, he noticed the shadows lengthening in the street. Time for prayers. He turned pale. "Heck, I'll be dead late."

A trolley car rattled past the pool hall. With a whoop, he made a dash for it. The conductor reached out and lifted him bodily to the platform by the coat collar. He stopped a block before the synagogue which he entered just as they were starting mincha.

Elated by his acceptance by the crowd and the success of his maneuvers, again Ezekiel pretended illness. This time the boys insisted on knowing how far he had advanced with the education of his old man. Ezekiel reeled off the long story about how he had gotten away with going to the Hebrew college where they study from eight in the morning until nine at night with Sunday thrown into the bargain. "You think what I got now is bad. But that is what they call 'sheol' in Hebrew—compound hell."

The boys had only to mention it, and he entertained them with quotations from the Mishnah. Jerking up his thumb, rocking back on his heels, he chanted through his nose: "Baba Kamma: The First Gate. A man may be guilty by an act of his ox. If an ox blinded the eye of his slave or knocked his tooth out, is he

guilty or not guilty? If his ox hurt his father or mother, if his ox set fire to a stack of corn on the Sabbath, if it knocked down a wall, if it gored another ox or cow, is he guilty or not guilty? The ox of a woman, or the ox of orphans, or the ox of a guardian, or a wild ox, or an ox belonging to the Temple, guilty or not? Rabbi Meier says this, Rab says that; and Akiba and Judah still tackle the question: Guilty or not Guilty?"

"Guilty!" howled the boys from amidst the alleys and tables.

As a reward for the entertainment, they made Ezekiel score-keeper. Feeling more important than the Scribes and more sinful than the Babylonians, armed with a thick black crayon, he worked behind those expert bowlers—Larry and great windy Trombone. Once was all he had to be told, and he knew the lingo, "frame" and "spare" and "strike" and the rest. When it came to rolling the balls, however, even the smaller ones against the duckpins, he could get nowhere, and he had to give up in chagrin. The boys, shoving their pronged fingers into the holes, winked and promised that as soon as he learned the knack of handling girls bowling would come easy.

Again Ezekiel trolleyed to the synagogue, waiting until the last moment. As he stood on the rear platform dwarfed by the men in caps and rough clothes, he tightened his fists until the nails bit his flesh, and he swore that come what may he would not always be puny and helpless, that one of these days he would surprise every single one of those fellows.

To keep his father, who was getting suspicious, off the track, he had to skip several meetings. On his return the boys greeted him like a long-lost comrade, batting him on the back, Trombone offering him a cigaret.

"Sure, I smoked before," lied Ezekiel. As he cupped his hands around the match, the cigaret went up in a flash, singeing his nose and throwing him against the wall.

Larry, who had been in the rear, ran forward. "Hell, that's a lousy way to treat a kid." He couldn't help grinning as he opened the stub and showed the rubber goods.

"It's a skullcap," hooted Trombone.

Ezekiel turned away. Keeping his tears back, he rubbed his nose ruefully.

The boys sallied out of the Academy, headed toward the Avenue, and stopped in front of a tenement in the market section. On all sides were pushcarts with cowpeas, chestnuts, snails, fish, and fruit.

Larry took Ezekiel to one side. "If a dago with a black horse that's got a white face like a broncho comes around selling the banana, ring the bell. Danunziata's the name. Ring three times, and keep your eyes peeled."

After an hour, the whistling boys filed downstairs, at peace with the world.

"Good work," said Larry. "Take this butt and use it. One of these days we'll take you upstairs. Now you'd better shove off to the synagogue."

Ezekiel pocketed the scented cigaret. Resentfully, he watched the boys disappear among the carts. What did they think he was any way? He stared at the dark tenement, a window opened, and a young woman with braids, the Jezebel herself, waved a hand at him from the top storey.

Throwing his shoulders back, he strode down the street and pushed through a crowd gathered near the Italian fish store. Over the grating was a huge black carcass with a sign, "Australian Sea Turtle." The storekeeper stood over it with a stick.

A Jewish woman asked, "Nu, can it be eaten?"

An elder with a duster of a beard remarked, "It is a kind of fish, but forbidden flesh because it has no scales."

"If it were a cow, we could ask ourselves the question, 'Has it split hoofs?'"

Ezekiel snorted scornfully, "Meat is meat," and ripping through the astounded crowd, he swaggered towards the trolley station.

His behavior that night in the synagogue, striding inside in the middle of prayers, his burnt nose, aroused his father's anger.

"It was the sun," Ezekiel blurted, bristling up.

Again his mother rushed to shield him. "See, he is feeling better. His eyes have light in them. Soon he will be able to study holiness all day."

Ezekiel locked himself in his room to enjoy the gift. The little ram rose in its thicket, and his heart pounded so fiercely that he felt faint. He restrained himself. No, he must be in all particulars like the fellows whose bodies were as trim and flashy as the cuesticks they were so expert with.

When he proposed that the fellows let him play more than guard in front of the tenement, they gave him the horse laugh: they'd have to throw an anchor out, write to the Lost and Found Department, etc. Only the Italian pinboy, who was a regular visitor to the tenement, told him how to go about it.

His mother, whom he approached for the money, sent him to the old man.

"Am I as rich as Korech?"

"Who says you are? Korech had 300 camels which carried only the keys to his gold."

The shochet's anger flared. "Give him the dome of heaven!" Nevertheless, he was pleased with the boy's learning.

Ezekiel received only a fraction of what he asked for; he had to save the rest by going without the glass of milk which he bought daily in the school lunchroom. Angry with the fellows because he felt they were interested merely in using him, he decided to keep away from them until after the consummation when he would force them to accept him on equal terms.

To prepare himself he looked up the subject, read in the Penta-teuch about Judah and in the Proverbs about the woman whose couch was decked with coverlets from Egypt and whose bed was perfumed with aloes and cinnamon. The Mishnah was far more satisfactory. In the section on women, he came across the law which strengthened him considerably: 1) If a boy nine years old and a day has connection with his deceased brother's wife . . . 2) The duty of marriage enjoined in the Law is: every day for

them that are unoccupied; twice a week for laborers; once a week for mule drivers; once every thirty days for camel drivers; and once every six months for sailors . . . Nothing secret. Nothing sinful. This the common thing in the world of men and women.

Having saved sufficient money, he went up one Saturday morning after he had lied to his mother again by saying he must take a short walk before services to get rid of a pain in his chest. He hurried to the Avenue to make sure of Danunziata, and he found the smoky-faced peddler stationed some distance away from the tenement. Nearby was a Jewish medicine man selling remedies for all diseases. "Myim," the medicine man quavered. Holding the bottle heavenward, "Shomyim," and then "Lochymim," and drank his stuff down, dropping an eyelid.

He must keep him in mind if anything happened, thought Ezekiel as he went down the street, his eyes on the high window. Breathlessly, he hurried up the wooden stairs. He felt his hands shaking, cursed himself for a fool, and then hit the door powerfully with his fist.

"Come."

He opened and shut his dry mouth.

"Come on."

The door whined open, and there stood the peddler's girl with thick black braids hanging over her breasts. "What's it?"

He stuttered, and then with a rush, "Heck, I'm here to—."

"The little chickie feller!" She stepped back with a wide grin.

The kitchen was hung with washing, the floor piled with crates and straw. A bunch of kids shot out of another room, fell on him, and pulled at his fists.

"They gotta go down for candy, mister."

He drew out his dollar with an air of importance. "Sure."

She took the bill. "I ain't go no change."

Gallantly, he gave her all his silver, and shoving his hands into his pockets, gazed about him calmly and indifferently.

The girl pushed out the squealing kids. "Don't come till I call you." She locked the door.

Ezekiel tripped over a dishrag, found himself in a bedroom, on one wall of which there was a picture of a man with spearlike moustaches.

"Come," she said in a throaty voice, "Saturday's kinda busy." She yawned on the bed.

He remained in the center of the room, the blood clubbing against his temples.

"You ain't scared?"

"Who the heck's?" In spite of himself, his voice cracked.

"What you got there?"

It was his talis koton, his small praying shawl, which he wore under his shirt.

"Aw, I'm a Jew."

She slapped her great bare thighs. "Somethin else tells better."

He stopped, while uncontrollable laughter shook her spread body. "You—," he started, flushing furiously. Then as her laughter continued, he grabbed his hat and fled out of the room down the wooden stairs into the street.

Tears of rage and helplessness kept coming up in him as he rushed between the pushcarts. He reached the apartment house, his fury gone, so weak that he could hardly drag himself upstairs. He took the talis koton which he wore like a bib on his chest and hurled it into his closet.

He returned to school, sullen and pale. In class Trombone couldn't stop guffawing behind his "Gallic Wars."

At the bell Ezekiel hastened to him. "What's loose?"

"So you give one look, runt, and scoot?"

The blood darkened the pinched face. "Keep it under the hat!"

"Yeh, under the skullcap."

"Louse, thick head louse." He raised a fist, not much larger than a walnut, while the grinning Trombone dared him to strike.

The whole school heard about his misadventure. Everybody

rode him mercilessly. Even Larry grinned as he told him to snap out of it and take it like a sport.

Ezekiel stayed away from the fellows, his short arms against his sides, ready to fight. He stood this for several days and then he couldn't take it any longer. He complained that he was sick and took to bed.

In bed he did not have to worry about prayers or synagogue. His mother did not let him out of her sight. Friday evening when he seemed to be feeling better, she put pillows on the armchair, and had him eat before the rest of the family.

"Tell me," she asked for the thousandth time, "what hurts?" She kept stroking his arm.

"Nothing!"

"How can nothing make my only sweet son sick?"

"All right, you asked for it. What's after me is this babel, this Latin, Hebrew, Yiddish. I can't even breathe."

"Child!" She hissed in her breath painfully. "Child, what evil eye has struck you?"

"Stupid! There ain't no evil eye."

She held him off as if she were seeing him for the first time. "How can you talk that way to your own mother?" She moaned, "Can it be that your father is right?"

The street door opened. The old man entered with an unusually stern face. He washed his hands and sat down at the table.

She cried out in her fright, "I said he needs a doctor. All week I have said so."

"Doctor, cocktor," snapped the old man. "There is nothing the matter with him. You are his diseases, you who have been pampering him like a nobleman's goat!" He leaned forward. "Tell me, my kaddish, where were you last Saturday?"

Ezekiel leaped from his chair. "This ain't no Spanish Inquisition!" He ran into his room and slammed the door behind him.

When the mother tried to follow, the old man shouted at her,

ordering her to remain at the table. All during the meal the parents quarreled, and the mother shielded the boy, declaring she did not believe stories, people blabbered, there was no sense to them, like a wind in the morning.

Ezekiel sat on his bed biting his nails feverishly. Who had seen him in the market? To whom could he turn for help? No, he could never go back to the fellows, those big loathsome yokels, never go back to school. All his life he would hear those taunts, carry this brand, this mark worse than Cain's. Cornered, he felt the walls were falling in on him.

Tortured, he tossed about in bed, could find no comfort in his body. At last he fell into a troubled sleep. He dreamed he was in a sour bedroom with straw and crates, and the woman was with him. She put a book under her body to raise herself; it was the Mishnah. "Come, it's Satiday already." The window flew open. In fluttered his father riding a red rooster. "Cock, cocker, cockerel!" He made for him with his sacrificial knife.

Ezekiel reared out of the nightmare with a wild cry and a sharp pain through his spine.

His mother hastened into the room. "Was that you, child?" She sat down beside him, took his hand. "What shall we do with you? God, give us counsel."

The window was pale with morning.

"Come, you did not eat much for supper. I have fresh rolls I myself baked. After shul we'll have the fat soup you like so much. You will feel better."

"I ain't going to synagogue no more. No more synagogues for me!"

She clasped her hands to her breast. "Ezekiel!"

His father hurried into the room. "Get dressed!"

Ezekiel turned to the wall.

"No more will you bluff me. Get dressed. Put on your talis koton."

"I ain't wearing it no more."

The old man stiffened, and then caught hold of the bedpost.

The mother whispered in awe, "Honeypot, son, do you know what you are saying?"

"I'm through. No more praying. No more with the ox till I can't breathe. I can't live even." His eyes were wild as he cried, "No more ox for me!"

The old man raised his chunky hands and brought them down on the boy. As Ezekiel resisted, he tore his pajamas, uncovering his nakedness, and then he hurled him to the floor. Shouting, "Wait, this is only the beginning," he pushed the terrified mother out of the room, locked the outer door, and tramped downstairs with her to the synagogue.

Ezekiel stirred to his knees. He swayed for a moment, and breathing hoarsely, he staggered into the living room. Looking around wildly, he caught sight of the bookcase. He yanked open its door and fired out the holy books, the phylactery bags, prayer shawls. At last he found the velvet box in which his father kept the knife he treasured so much. This had been presented to him by the owner of the poultry market, president of the synagogue. Like precious glass, like pure flame shone the knife which could cut ten thousand hens without nicking the blade. Ezekiel raised it as if to break it into a thousand pieces. Choking back his tears, he brought the knife down against his throat.

A Little Anthology of Contemporary Poetry

JOHN BERRYMAN · ARTHUR BLAIR · JOHN MALCOLM BRINNIN

ALFRED YOUNG FISHER · CHARLES HENRI FORD · IVAN GOLL

HUGH CHISHOLM · H. R. HAYS · ROBERT HIVNOR

GEORGE KAUFFMAN · WELDON KEES · JAMES LAUGHLIN

JOSEPHINE MILES · NICHOLAS MOORE · SAMUEL FRENCH MORSE

F. T. PRINCE · SANDERS RUSSELL · CHARLES SNIDER

PAUL WREN · MARGUERITE YOUNG

EIGHT POEMS

MARGUERITE YOUNG

THE JOURNEY

HERE, in the glass-walled chamber wheeling
Under the low sky's snow ceiling
This Christmas eve in the snow-banked country,

The farmer chatters of starlings at his wheel
But the woman by his side is still,
Her baby sleeps like a stiff doll on her arm.

And the old car lopes home toward evening
As snowflakes curve in arc lights of that reeling
Road so lost to the windshield now

While in the arc lights upheld is every
Star or snowflake soft as memory
Beating on the dream of glass.

Snow storms on the glass-walled chamber weaving
On no road the eyes can find and turning
As the white road turns in the white wind,

But the farmer talks on of autumn and grain,
The fields he plowed before his blood ran thin
And what seemed the very end of spring,

Y O U N G

A hard season! till his gnarled hands remember
Some tree sign of an earlier December
Pointing toward home and his mother's face.

And country cornets will follow cold and lonely
With him beyond their silver-shattered tree
A course like his this Christmas eve.

V O Y A G E R M A N

HE, voyager man, whom old cosmologies framed
Between the upper and the under air,
He where the winds twelve-blowing as the hours
Struck on his ship with the dull thud of the sea,

There where the waters calmed familiar and kind
He saw like silver dust blown from far inland
The poppy seeds of inland sleep and butterflies
Falling in furrows on the cold, salt wave

And saw how far, the shore of white steaming rock
Whitened by dung of white sea birds, a beach
No tide hurries near but ever outward bears
The sea-bound, early voyager

with orange clouds of butterflies
in the loud, loud, loud sea falling
O, with what pollen from the beautiful planet
dust of the regal shore

Earth is the loneliest voyager.

Y O U N G

LEGEND IN GRASS: OF
INNOCENCE AND EVIL

How all space could also frame
Face of a drunken general
Leering vastly underground
As if he were unburied still,

That Alcibiades I feared
Jocund beneath magenta blossoms
Bled with blood of John the Baptist
Who here is forever headless,

That self-same staggered face should be
In a drain pipe looming suddenly
Where the trembling rabbit ran
Seeing unresurrected man.

The trembling rabbit sees the bared
Teeth whose aged appetite
Detains the wildest, soft eared
Sensation in the realm of night,

Rabbit who stares unblinking eyed
At thatched and bearded face of doom
Who stares at him unblinking eyed.
Believe that John the Baptist rose,

His martyred head upon him still,
That was another star than this
Where by the sensual and coarse
Head which will not let him pass

The innocent creature is detained,
A fume, a smoke of sylvan breath
Beneath a darkly bleeding land
And neither one will suffer death.

Y O U N G

THE FUNERAL

IT IS late, I said: there will be a cold rain
This eve, and the willow leaves are whitening
And the moon, brighter in shower, as stars divide,
I said, will fall like rain. I said the earth would glide

From its moorings then, and we not know
But be ourselves the convoy to the soul.
And I said the mourners would be amazed then
Muffled in grave cloths of a silver stain

And every mourner would wear a silver crown,
I said, and be to himself the body of death.
And I said earth here would no more be
But butterflies in orbits over the dry sea.

And it all seemed simple, ample, and profound.
The farmer tethered his horse in the tremulous
Evening light, as he had always done
There under the cirrus of the sky's pale green.

But on our eyes there was a driven cloud, a mist,
And earth was turning on another course.
I felt its turn blindfolded as I seemed
And knew no road but what my heart had named,

And knew no road. I heard the neighing wind,
The creak of wheels. And earth was turning on
another way,
I felt its turn with funeral, the moon and stars.
So did earth amble outward, cortege or hearse.

Y O U N G

S N O W I N T H E M O U N T A I N S

T H I S snow is now so illusory it seems
Plato's snow more real than the shadow of snow
In the luminous mountains expanding with the theme
Of absolute, this beautiful. For here we are

In that unearthly earth which errs not and fails not

Where the steel-bladed sleigh now climbs, and horses breathe
And we breathe not. Their breaths are plumes on frostlit air.

But our sleigh bells are burdening with no farewell
The mountains of the shimmering startop towers
And this is our whole adventure, being twin souls
Of real and unreal, both real and our shadow face

Snow-lighted, under the soft ledge of the snow,

With real and unreal both, the ineffable rose
Stiffening, as our tears are frozen.

O, but between two wintry planets of hope
O, could one voice speak out from the luminous mountains
Whose shadow is that unreal and that stopped heart.

S L O W M O T I O N

T H E heart is that camera of a slow motion
And stellar eye, and the second's twinkle delayed
To be a dream in the crystal mind of God.

The heart is that camera and stellar eye
Beguiling the angels to linger in their flight

Y O U N G

Staying silver wing-tips and a gold headlight
As insect-angel climbs on the beam of the dark soul
Or the mechanic angel is operable by a remote control

The heart is that camera whose reel moves slow,
Bubble whose fine convulsion is made to seem
The mirroring bubble and the deathless scheme.

For the heart decoys an image of time winged
For the heart is that camera and clarifies
What to the eyes is the twinkling of the eye,
Motion as fixed; and with a fabulous precision
The swift, as slow delayed, past our last breathing.

T H E C L I N I C

THE warden wept before the lethal beans
Were dropped that night in the airless room,
Fifty faces peering against glassed screens,
A clinic crowd outside the tomb.

In the corridor a toy train pursued
Its tracks past countryside and painted station
Of tinny folk. The doomed man's eyes were glued
On these, he was the tearless one

Who waited unknowing why the warden wept
And watched the toy train with the prisoner
Who watched the train, or ate, or simply slept.
The warden wrote a sorry letter,

"The man you kill tonight is six years old,
He has no idea why he dies,"
Yet he must die in the room the state has walled
Transparent to its glassy eyes.

Y O U N G

And yet suppose no human is more than he,
The highest good to which mankind attains
This dry-eyed child who watches joyously
The shining speed of toy trains,

What warden weeps in the stony corridor,
What mournful eyes are peering through the glass,
Who will ever shut a final door
And watch the fume upon a face?

A T T H E C I N E M A

O N T H E waste expanse of canvas time's exposure
In the mechanic timelessness unwinds
The phantom snow upon the cold dead lover
As theory of our universal love

Yea, unwinds that film of moving history
Peacock glitter on the avenue
Dear, a beam from some far planet beaming
Dear, it is God's modern work of art

Unwinds from spindrift ribbon such mirage
As whips the tear beneath the stiff eyelid
And makes us dream the earth from Jupiter

As earth is, dear, our shadows on a film
O, not as the pregnant woman in this dark
But as match spurt lighting her cigarette
And focus on the white swan instead.

Shades we are now, bending toward earth shades
And no real bridge or no familiar river
And no texture of the curl but light

Y O U N G

But this pale glitter like the straws of stars
Telling which way the current floats in space
As on this screen the probable will build
Till pigeons decoy the steeple and bells
Eyeball of the horse, the intricate speed
Doorways, thousand apple trees in bloom

Till lovers stroll on the sombre avenue
In snow water readings of the playful beam's
Death rattle or cradle, beginning or end

And all illusory, a canvas screen
Such tattered shades allow must be their dream.

Such shrill cries emanate from grey blown hazard
Upon the track of sound through silences
But all their words were adjusted long ago
Seeming at one with the gesture of void heart

Seeming at one with the love light in their eyes.

Dear, but we shall guess upon what tragic disc
Their quarrel and reconciliation dwell
In isolation from their final kiss
Beneath the white hedge simulating peace

And we shall guess upon what disc or spool
The separate body and the spirit wind

In every omen synchronized with bells
With bells and lovers in a depthless shade

Running this hour tomorrow and tomorrow.

THE THEATRE OF ONE: SIX POEMS

JOHN MALCOLM BRINNIN

THE THEATRE OF ONE

THERE are no other persons in the play;
Where cycloramas breathlessly present
A month in pastel country, or a day
Whose hunting horns or traffic horns soar out
In orchestras of pity, I ascend
The tragic throne. Spotlit and lonely there,
With gestures eminent, I pose to shout
The bold dramatic words that die mid-air.

Ah, theatre, where death the soloist
Rehearses on the great grey stage the dance
Of my defeat; where fear the mad cellist
Melts in his chords the absent critic's brows
And, loud in darkness, wins no audience
To clap for heartbreak in a stricken house.

BY THE LAKE

In the florid part of minds, or on the card
A friend leaves saying "Get well soon," that lake
Is painted; there faultless swans move in their weird
Processionals, unswerving under bridge
And willow, tracking silence like a wake;
Yet we, alive and smiling, could explore
Those water-color houses on its edge,
Walk, effortless, through every paper door.

Here, in the trailing distance of a week,
 I know that landscape differently. Not swans,
 Not houses from a brush beguiled our walk
 Since, that day, oil was drilled and planes were downed,
 And I along those green undoubted lawns
 Might say your name with love, but lost the sound.

DEATH, HIS CONTENDING ANGEL

Death, his contending angel, and his song
 The reaches of whose measure drown the race,
 Spreads on our melting multitudes his wing.

The clerically enrobed have seen his face
 As manifest as any jack of spades;
 Theirs are the offices wherein dispraise

And celebration meet, where comfort feeds
 Appeased with words communiquéed at night;
 Only the catlike wanderers who breed

The loveless fauna of the slums must wait
 In ignorance of him; where want is all,
 The mind puts by the luxury of fate.

Death is the stranger there, the incidental
 Afternoon along the city block,
 A blue convulsion, paralytic fall,

Beyond whose moment, like a shattered lock,
 The areas of emptiness endure;
 Nor may the tides of hunger pause to look.

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BRINNIN

Day, in whose vistas life must dice with war;
Night, in whose deeper lawlessness the earth
Unites in lust or sleep the city poor,

Come over, come, like radium come forth
In day-shine, noon-shine, midnight sun to claim
That dark death-feathered figure; publish at birth

Those reasoning dimensions, laws to frame
A natural order modelled in man's need,
That prize of his survival struck from shame.

AT THE PIANO

He practices a tyranny of scales
Intent and whistling on the proper note,
Predestined, sure, the conversation grows
To argument in theme and counter-theme;
Yet when heart's hovering companion turns
The cliché pages of catchpenny song,
That instrument, true to the tamer, melts
Arpeggios of misconduct and remorse.
Though Christ and Mozart, genius like a plant,
March on the printed stair and sounding board,
His eyes reject them and his guilty hands
Beat out the nihilism of the blues;
Denying order for a honky-tonk,
The bad boy struts luxuriant evening.

We all have sat with disciplined calm hands,
Have kissed the keys with promises, and turned,
Charmed by the loping melodies, toward zoos

BRINNIN

Of sensuality, the zebra-lands.
Always the fun of tears, the fear of love
Intrude with waltzing patterns of their own;
The spilled martini stains the melody;
Winking, his friend demands a counterpoint
That shreds a perfect opus in mid-day.

The daughters of great music thus go down,
And down the visions of a soloist
Who, broken with necessity, gets up,
Mechanical and naughty, and goes out.

THE GEORGIAN HOUSE

The great house flames from out its blinded eyes
And every cracked and sabotaged beam falls
Across the darkening bodies; little mice
Flee fanwise and a burning parrot calls
For sweetmeats, sweetmeats, in his gilded room.

That Georgian mansion, whose surrendered gloom
And neoclassic pillars charmed a race
Of fathers, settles, guilty, to its doom
Ablaze with contradictions and disease;
Only the galleried ancestor whose cold

Accumulating eye maintains its walled
Intransigence looks on, while careful flames,
Reception-hall to scullery, attic to vault,
Explore the baroque order of decay;
Collapsing like a draughty argument,

BRINNIN

That world regime submits its eminent
Remains to time. But, ah, where are the young?
The cold debris lends cryptic evidence:
These charred eyes say, *I am my father's son*
Yet know the use of kisses, not of guns.

So have the choices of destruction done
Impartial destiny; and where the scarred
Allotments of mankind await the sun
And builders, nothing comes, not thing apart
Whose memory is human, or whose heart.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON

My own piano in the snow, the slow
Flakes falling on the skeleton of Brahms—
My own idea of order might becalm
The winds of public murder where they blow.

And those two nuns who go, like penguins, down
The formal arch of branches toward the skies,
May not their business be escape, their eyes
Alert for lightning or the baying hound?

This Sunday afternoon, so radioed
With operetta, casualties, and fruit,
Lopes through our loveless century, as mute
As tracks of blood along the hunter's road.

CHAKA

F. T. PRINCE

I. *The King Watches at Night*

THE air cool and soft,
The darkness early about this sorrow, I
Am alone awake, I am alone
To watch the trembling of so many tears
Above my hard and empty lands. The plain
Mutilated and scarified, with dust and ashes on a black face
Looks brittle as a moth's wing. Shall I weep?

The cattle had been gathered in the village, the leader
Bellowed on two dull notes, when
Passing a poor woman's hut I sniffed her hearth of curds
and embers
At dusk under the grey smoke of a dung-fire.
I heard her call her babes to supper and saw
The too-big-bellied urchins
Come clustering to the porridge-pot. And I thought
'You have done well for yourself,
But it is not very long
Since you would run weeping home because of the thunder
When the storm threw the old trees on their chins.'

Often night lets down darkneses upon me
And every kind of doubt to weigh upon me. Then
I have said to him, as he thrust out his breast,
As he leapt forward like a pitch-black bullock,
As he buttocked with his buttocks
I have said, 'Night,
Are you not coming to an end because of dawn?'
And he murmurs back, the night,
'You go too far, you have gone far enough.'

I have wandered out in the thin tang of white stars
While my friends were asleep below the hills.
Depending only on rumours of my starry meals
It was not for them to know how far my gaze was set.

2. He Compares Old Customs with Those of His Kingdom

THERE would come up many idle men to sit with the strangers
And sit down at our side. How they puffed off their words!
They would ask us what ancestry we were of;
We would tell them that and tell them
How for our ancestors we set apart
A bit of a broken pot or a forked stick
It might be, in the hut, or a little shrine
As who should say, a set of stones
Carefully selected, with a tree growing up in the middle:
Or how there might be a special sacred tree or grove of trees
Or finally there might be a true tomb
Used as a temple.

The variations might be innumerable
But there would be always remembrance,
It would be always as we said
Although the manner of our remembrance varied.
There might be libations of beer,
There might be gifts on those altars
Of all that men use for food;
There might be prayers and appeals from those in trouble.

And they replied and they said
'We think well of these men
Who it seems will be far off on some high place
Perhaps, by the day dawning.'
And they made us sit down again

To hear again how we revered the dead
And filled up our pipes with sweet herbs
Although they had not half enough for themselves.

But now the old men and the infirm have been well killed.
Now there are spies who crawl back from the south
Bearing on cheeks and shanks the sores
Of a new sickness. They will be burned. And there are captains
Who have returned from failure, to be hanged.
And my singing messengers have taxed the coast,
My soldiers weep with hurry at my commands.
They go out to slay, they return at night weary of slaughter,
They advance and attack and outflank and flee all at once.
And on the most desirable of my hills
In the sweetest of fastnesses I speak well of them.
And I have divided the captives, allotted them ranks.
From time to time thus I established
Twenty-five regiments.
Some wear a headdress of otter-skin, others of leopard-skin,
The wing-feathers of the eagle or the ostrich
Are commonly added to these
But the red wing-feathers of the green lory
Are worn only by royal grant.
And I have given them names,
Called my regiments Decoys,
Slashes, Gluttons or else Bees
Ambushes, Mountains, the Blue Haze.
So we had too a name in the world
And war was our host in these places (there was blood in
the dregs of the cup).

And so with white or black ox-tails, kilts of leopard-skin
And the broad shields of stretched cow-hide
White or brown with a crimson or with a black spot,
They went out. So my state

Was fanned by a frond of fern and in the red shadow
 Of cloud-like trees I was repaid.
 Among gossip of moist leaves, tongues of an upstart court
 To my gaudy establishment as general
 Many emissaries, bitter, brought the crane's feather
 And offered many tokens to placate, including
 Sea-shells and a quantity of melons.

3. How Festivals Were Celebrated

THE eyelid severed from its terrible schemes
 Is reproached by a leafage built of numberless small flames.
 Tenderness is peculiarly active
 In the first days of spring weather.
 The province is all astir with fronds and buds
 And when one walks out in the meadows a sweet steam
 Floats up beneath one's foot. A scarlet tree
 Lit by the late wet season to her tips
 Sways and offers to the man who sways a scarlet crown
 And shakily a man's mind
 Controls its longing to be spilt.
 A couple of dew-drops lying
 In the hollow of a leaf.

So a man may be slain for his eminence in dancing
 When the plain is alive with hair-like flowers!
 At last there will be something to be said
 That I have made my own.

I have brought fear to this people,
 I have rendered them as rich and smooth as ox-blood.
 But am I a bird of prey that I pursue
 Only after the scent of a carcass? I might say
 How with my lust I have refreshed the laws,
 Giving out orders to hoe: and in the autumn

How some were allotted new wives.
 How after my hunting they passed many hot days
 Tossing the meat the one to the other
 And laughing at the fat that hung in tassels.
 The condemnation of the warriors at an end,
 Those who might die with the chief I kissed on the breast
 and dismissed.

And there were the high days of the mind, the days of
 high feasting
 There were the feast days when, bare as a bolt
 I danced before the people: as, on a dumb waste of green grasses
 And lilies tangled like a sheep's wet back
 When the dawn's light was snowy in the sky and under foot
 Light bubbled up and trickled to my foot. And on an evening
 Wreathed with fond hues when the red rock
 Smoked with a soft flame it had sucked
 And when the washed air with that flush
 Was burdened, I might have cried I was puffed up
 With gross and fanciful enjoyments. Holidays
 When on the smooth floor of a public place
 As if in the teeth of all things I would act
 As thunder, commandeer an echoing tube
 And a congratulatory drum. And there were days
 When the young sky was like a lake, but softer,
 And to my voice, to purify the army,
 The rivers once down, to depart in the dust
 Of a perfumed month, a month
 Of pollen, we devised a long dance before bathing.

4. He Bathes in the Morning

WINGS rise, the shrubs flutter.
 I have bathed in this solitary water
 And by the pool beside the flowering thorn

I turn a question over in my hands.
 And in the opinion of this palest empty dawn
 When a couple of birds to mock are making apart a single son,
 Which of us can forgive himself? for all are,
 The song says, guilty of all.

The odour of journeys mingles with despair.
 If the branches of the sweet-thorn are all broken,
 They have been broken for our sins. Yet everywhere
 The sweet-thorn with an odour
 Of honey pains the deep waste of this hour of penitence.
 The male bird gives a whistle
 And his companion caps it like a bell,
 And there is only this, that we are worthy.

5. The People Rest after Conquests

SUCH were the gifts inflicted upon us who trembled
 At their brilliance. And a sharp rain
 Having poured, we stretch ourselves in the sun to heal.
 The hills are like old men sitting in their blankets,
 The wild things are gay. Buck jumps, hawk dives.
 And at the tip of that peak, like a knot
 Of white spittle in a brown pool, see, that cloud
 Softly clinches peace. The deepest colour,
 The most mysterious, that of our flesh tells
 We have eaten luminous shadows. We smoke hemp
 And the conversation of some swallows is both a keen burden
 And sweeter than that of the dead. And the foot-hills grow rosy
 A leopard-skin is trodden beside the enraptured river
 And stretched on the glossy backs of boulders. The woman
 is panting,
 Her dug hang forward as she leans; as for her daughter,
 She is light and dreadful as a spear, she too leaves a gash.

We clap our hands together. What do you dance,
 What do you dance? we ask. We clap hands. How
 Is it one sings your king's name? We have dreamed
 Of an adorable authority and the brooks
 Sobbing absurdly in the bright morning, the brooks
 Glitter. There is so often news,
 Yet we listen for news of the Men of the Sun, and of the Mist,
 We murmur against the Men of the Baboons and those of
 the Showers,
 We learn of the Men of the Little Bluebuck, the Men of the
 Young Lions,
 Of the Sons of the Dancers of Iron and of the Children
 Of the Elephant. All these are ours
 And we are the People of Heaven. Tell us no lies
 On our noons made loud by abolished clans.

EIGHT POEMS

JOSEPHINE MILES

MAN OF LETTERS

HE had a reading eye which used to find
Jacks in the box in the paragraph, jacks to open,
And nobody ever drew to any better.

What he could see in Hawley-Smoot or the races,
Kayak II's health for example, always had a spring to it,
Jumped with a very grace from where in print it lay.

Take a long waste area of four hundred square pages with him,
And probably find before one hundred fifty
A bubbling spring, a joyful cap and bells, out at you.

O words so kind and human kind to take
That fortune from his eye, or give it him,
Sprouts in the sentence, royals in the voice.

THE ARCHAEOLOGISTS

He was less discouraged than the other riders.
When they found the plateau isolate and upended,
Those fair haired elysian hunters dismounted and cried.

In blue arc, chocolate range, tawny crest not a vestige
Of one grace of life, one antiquity
Of noble feathered purpose near or wide.

He stubbed cross among the slabs too but slantwise kicked them
And went willingly away with no evidence
But his reckon of burrow mouths at the underside.

M I L E S

H E R O

I liked the small pale man who leaned, I liked the
twenty
Five year old explorer at the pole of age,
The wan producer who knew his own desire.

I heard the quiet hero in the story relate
His long intention, and no more that day,
And that was crisis in its merest mention.

I saw the monuments break the backs of good will
And mud along in structure till this ghost
Spoke them their purpose and they rose that way.

This poor pale planner of mild manner,
Thinking aloud the deed for the bent kneed
And won to it as by their will decreed.

The one unshouting unleading and unpleading
In a creased still assurance tentative,
Waiting a magnitude to confirm and tally.

The ghost I liked, the young pale pole beater
Back with content and conscience, being ready
For a self-portrait in the face of State.

E F F O R T F O R D I S T R A C T I O N

(For Henry Adams)

Effort for distraction grew
Ferocious, grew
Ferocious and paced, that was its exercise.

M I L E S

Effort for distraction strained,
Legged in the hour-like single stretch
Its heels and sight to feel, so slit its eyes.

Effort without effort or with
Greatest possible effort always centered
Back in the concentrated trough where lies

The magnet to the filings
The saw tooth to the tongue
The turn of life to a returning life.

By all the traction of mind and spin of spirit
Having gained grasp gasped to bear it
Having got ground groaned, furious title holder.

Paced and cried, so sore for a different direction, grew
Ferocious, grew
Unkind to strength that gave it strength to grow.

C O N V E R S A T I O N

Some people talk nothing for four or a hundred
But language for two.
Quips.
Special beruffled style. Do you get it?
You are not supposed to.

Adornment nods the Morse dashes and the sender
Laughs neatly,
Quips.
That was a good one. Do you get it? Wait.
Sometimes he will translate it to you.

M I L E S

L E A G U E R

I went down to the Salvation Army and gave away
Fourteen brass buttons and some magazines
A curly spoon and a pack of thread.
Still I was lonesome for sweet charity.

I went to the embassy and I gave
Sixteen relatives to the causes of diplomacy
Including air and sea forces and poisoning.
Still I was lonesome for the love of man.

I wrote to the President, Sir, what this country needs
Is to give twenty nine gifts to the nations of the world.
Not socks. Goods. Peas, beans and barleycorn.
See, we are lonesome for sweet charity.

W E L L M A D E

Familiar to our readers
In all its special vein
Is the form of the tale in the author's careful form.
The incident beginning
And then begun again
With love and care to keep the cockles warm.

The palpitant unfoldment
And dear and sudden end,
The shape of the tale in the author's burning hope
Familiar to our readers,
But not the blind
Looking around of the mind for the shape.

M I L E S

L I N E

Look at the middle of his face
There sits the streak of self,
The stretch from bone to bone.
What he would say.

Never gets to his lips
Never quicks his tongue
Never deeps his throat
Never fills his shouting lung.

Sits in the middle of his face,
Across his cheek the line
Of his own speaking self,
What he would say.

FROM POEM IN THREE TIMES

CHARLES HENRI FORD

First Time: I

By whose order does the rollicking beast
Unfold its hand to be read for fun
And wonder what the lines of its two feet hold
While looking for the flea in your eye's gold house?
The foul hair flows that smelled so sweet
Out the window and down the street;
The Human Fly like an unforeseen hour
Walks up the walls of his shuddering tower.
Ventriloquist knife, scrape against the bone,
Approximate the gist of an old moan's music!
Fingernails of flowers, petals from an arm,
Drop to the sad farm, echo and echo,
Craftily combine with minerals of sound
To stimulate a nation's rhyme and harrow.
Solar plexus bee, become a cloud of names,
Drizzle the fiddle whose bang lies waiting
Like a seed, like a rod, like a road, a warning,
A pleasant good morning or an unwept grave—
Yes! a pleasant good morning or an unwept grave.
Father come home, the gnome wrote the digger.
My spade is a spoon now, the sick farmer told the cow.
My head is a hotbed, said the sailor to his brother.
Of what? asked the window, framing a closed face—
This is a high place.—Too low for my secret!
Sang the man with a one-way ticket tongue.
Don't go, please don't! the day cries daily,
Lost as usual, to the sinking sun—
To the sinking, high and dry, sinking sun . . .

When breeze on the body quakes the heart's boat
 Is it a sigh that inspired such a storm,
 Or perhaps the weird wind from a dying man's throat,
 Or was the air devilled by a late born troll,
 Or could it be breath from the wild lungs of love
 Come to drain to the dregs this ocean of fear?—
 The heart's boat scratches the heavens above
 And a fish with fever lies flat on the floor,
 Yes! a fish with fever lies flat on the floor.
 Do you know that man with the back of stone,
 Loved by leaves, lulled by the dry
 Leaves' music made as they grate by:
 The river's rhythm runs in his blood
 And he wishes he were dead (for his wishes are dead)
 And he longs for the river instead of dry leaves:
 Little by little he would race with the water
 And forget the harsh music, scraped from air,
 But everybody lets him lie there, lie
 With his back of stone and the leaves' bone combs
 And he never knows how the foul hair flows,
 He never supposes that the river is his hair!
 Given a foot, the ball of the world
 Would hop but given a heart to bleed
 The single rock would fill a double need;
 Given a wing or a beard, the stick
 That pounds would tire of its victim quick,
 Without the water of a lie, truth's root would die.
 Given gills and a fin, a horse
 Might find the crossroads deep in a lake,
 But it would take more than a horse's tail
 For a fish to flood the streets of jail.
 And given the spool of death tomorrow
 Who can tell who would rewind sorrow,
 Who can tell if you'd rewind your sorrow?
What is this sorrow? asked the voice in the fire.

A black boat with a luminous eye
 Slid like a lion through the net of night,
 The worm awoke to find its arms gone,
 The mole rolled in search of howl or feather,
 The weather turned cold, the weather turned warm,
 The weather never fathomed the soul's gold corn.
What could this sorrow be? asked a voice like snow.
 If I live in the snow, said the child to himself,
 When I grow up I can sell my pelt:
 Summer will only patch me with red
 And no one will love me after I'm dead!
 Yes! I will love you after you're dead
 Said the tiniest voice that was ever heard:
 Where did it come from, the tiniest voice
 That ever was heard? Not from a bird,
 Not from a bug nor a fly, nor a butterfly,
 Nor was it the last sound the wind makes
 Before it reaches infinity.
 Oh where did it come from? What was it then?
 End or beginning, beginning or end?
 The cat raised a paw and underneath
 Saw a lifetime of love and grief
 Then laid its neck upon the spot—
 Now a skeleton wags from the top of the tree:
 Bones known as the flag of ecstasy;
 But few can repeat what the cat discovered
 For the spot of land was like any other.
 Ah, not until your tears are sand
 Will the whole world be a desert
 Nor will the last ark be planned
 Until the first word turn to water,
 The first word will turn to water
 Not if you follow ideas of the moon
 But the moment your sand tears fall
 And all the world is a desert,

Then the last ark will be planned
And your first word wash away this room!

First Time: II

Oh the jeopardy!
Three senses on a bough where five should be,
Ten swords in the purse of Penelope,
Thirty heavy pearls on a strand of hollow hair,
Sixty empty throats for a full ounce of air;
Many men to every dwarf,
Though the wind blow north, murder veers south,
Yet the fire's conspiracy remains
Let three thousand fires go out!
Balance by the hardest, easy not to do,
Makes one wing blow where three blew,
Tall flowers fall, recover by themselves,
Ten tigers do the tricks of three geese,
Wheels pick up their spokes and go home,
The tired iron bridges rear and relax,
The pale brick buildings turn on their backs,
Basements rise until they burst,
The mind's ten fingers fondle the universe!
How to hang on the merely indicated line,
Maintain the imaginary mountain of despair,
Deny that death's an engine hung in the sun,
Pit the interior landscape against what's there,
Pull a tooth from the aching dream,
Measure words by harpstring or lute,
Oh the jeopardy of the jump from note to note,
Oh the jeopardy!—See
The egg on end at the tip of the breeze,
The tired brick building spread like a fan,
The ribs close up like a hand of cards
And the bridge's elbow bend in pain.

Oh the cracks and chinks, the smiles of decay,
 The head peopled with uncanny demands:
 All the pearls' water leaks away
 And the fire wrinkles like a dwarf's canny laughter.
 See! the footprints no wind or rain can alter:
 A three-footed fabulous voice cleaves the light
 And the footprints hang in the ear's cave like bats
 And the rats with the healing touch are frustrated;
 The amputated year disappears in the crater
 Like the kiss of time that descends to your heart.
 The kiss of time is planted in all hearts
 And chokes with vegetation every last man!
 How the caravans meet at the end of the world:
 The great heart at the end of the world feeds today
 With veins that flow back to time's beginning.
Hold still!—the command that's never obeyed:
 The egg on end at the tip of the breeze
 Will always break and always the five
 Senses will fall from the bough of thought;
 And what will survive jeopardy's delight?
 What survives the risk the day takes
 Leaping inside the dark egg of evening?
 What supernatural glue fools the eye with images,
 The sky with tears, the blood with sweetness,
 The wall with silence, joy with its rejoicing?
 The old man of the sea begins
 To whistle like the top of spring,
 Hails the shell that floats like a sickle,
 Damns the sea-flowers tickled
 Out of their skins and the fishes
 Neighing as if at stable doors.
 Growing younger hour by hour
 He tries to grab the sun by the hair,
 No other vertigo ever was so dire,
 Not the nightmare of a sea-salt burial

Nor the horror of resurrection in the whale's one lung;
 Whizzed back to childhood he yells in vain:
 Growing old was never like this!
 Save me, sea, from the dizzy drop
 From age to youth, oh enough—enough!
 But the old man broke in three thousand pieces
 Of golden sand; now scattered on shores
 From pole to pole, each is a gilt flea,
 Infinitesimal jeopardy,
 The whole hard world is wailing from or for!
 Whose knock in the box under the antlered arm?
 The woe of the first pearl operated on.
 Whose forehead marked pull is a ditch with five stitches
 And rollicking hair that flows farewell by inches?
 Only the brute that knows its own future,
 Only the ape with the rapturous bone:
 Here am I, he says, like the earth itself,
 Full of life, full of death,
 And nothing to dance upon!
 Oh the jeopardy of nothing to dance upon!
 When the snow heard that, like a great white bat
 It covered the town with its stinging wings
 And the wind brought whatever the wind brings
 And the heart's boat whistled as if eternity
 Were heaving a last sigh, birds became murderous,
 Tigers shy, and the worm finally bristled,
 Glory, glory sang the Human Fly
 For the unforeseen hour was visible:
 The earth began to fall, a swarming tear
 With no history and no face to fall from:
 "Welcome!"—the voice of the void.
 "Welcome!"—the pearl in the box.
 "Welcome!"—the flea in the pearl.
 Welcome the end of the world!
 Welcome the end of the world!

First Time: III

Ruined and radiant you are my second sight,
 Your breasts are pyramids piercing sun and moon,
 Your arms are vines entangling every planet,
 You swell with cities of venom and diamonds,
 Your thighs are seas that have drowned all armies,
 Your knees are theaters where everything is true,
 Your ankles rattle with doom's dice, meaningless,
 Your toes are tentacles at whose sucking touch
 The hardest heart flowers as suddenly as tears . . .
 Which frozen land of your eyes shall I enter
 To rescue myself wrestling that octopus of ice?
 If the door of one leads to the exit of the other,
 I shall emerge with my numb body and lower it
 To the fire of your lips where all things arduous
 And angelic are resurrected as in some divine hell.
 You speak: the devil swindles the doorbells of heaven,
 You run: the trees of blood are uprooted,
 You turn to look at me: this devastation
 Seems natural now, waits for your wonders.
 Ha, the teeth of the tiger drip stiff honey
 On the tip of the dissolving tongue that echoes
 Wrinkled syllables of an eloquent palm;
 An untold wind combating the tall storm
 Is mistaken for the storm, a purifying fire
 Thought foolish, the seer with one eye
 Called handicapped, the prophetess of night
 Too many times routed by a louder mouth.
 I await your ruined and long-tongued wonders:
 When will you strike dead the engineers of nothing,
 Confer the watermelon's speech
 On those incapable of reading seeds,
 Replace the felon with an amorous machine?
 I await the order for the breathless rock

To brave the hurried river's hairy honey,
 The river that once with its wings of water
 Tried to fly away with the earth to hereafter
 And was stopped in its flight by the pin of the sun!
 Now that you've begun, my second sight,
 To turn fright's angel inside out,
 Never go back! or the icy octopus, whose animosity
 I drain for an angel's melted health,
 Will come to life with me inside,
 The octopus inside of me,
 And when you turn, examine your creation,
 How unnatural it will seem, how natural it will be!
 How natural it will be when you reveal
 The exact position of the heart of the earth.
 What fortress of secrets can a lone hope hold
 Against the advancing second sight's formation?
 What reality does death disprove?
 None! none! No secrets and no disproof!
 One of your eyes, crystal and bristling,
 Explores those pyramids and planets,
 Cities and seas; out of your ears
 Flow the shining bats of prophecy,
 Fling themselves like charred stars
 Towards the voice of the void, ringing with cold and so
 Your ruined and radiant wonders never cease
 To fool the sky with tears, the blood with sweetness,
 The wall with silence, joy with its rejoicing!
 I walk around a seed, and up
 A rod and down the road—a warning
 Burdening my shoulders—only I can feel it:
 A round world on my shoulder-blades
 That I, only I, know is there. Where
 Can I lay it down, who will ever, ever believe it's there?
 Perhaps if I walk around the seed
 Again or up the rod or down the little road

That leads once more to who-knows-where
 I'll find someone who will heed this world of warning;
 An old, old woman told me
 When anyone, just anyone
 Is made to believe it's there,
 Why, this heavy world of warning will entirely disappear
 My world of warning and all warnings
 Will forever, yes, forever disappear!
 Of course I do not believe a word of what the old,
 Old woman said, for if there were no warnings
 What would there be in the world worth warning?
 Then we might as well be dead, I think,
 In that case, might as well be dead!
 For the flag of ecstasy would never fly
 Nor would I dare break the ice of your eye
 Nor crook my foot to cage the tiger's tears
 Nor roll the cold hoop of sorrow nor
 Replant the once sweet trees of our blood
 Nor climb the stair that winds with your mood
 And shatters the moment an old moan's music
 Gains the top then drops in a drizzle
 Nor would you compare the stone fiddle
 To the tricks of one goose; the wild child
 Would never howl, so you'd hardly know it anywhere,
 It would wander like a mute
 In the forest where wishes are fishes,
 Where no one ever feels the sky coming closer
 And closer, the heart of the world beating faster,
 Day making room in the grave for night,
 In the forest where no one ever hears
 The flag of ecstasy rear and rot,
 Rot and tremble and rear.

FIVE POEMS

H. R. HAYS

RUSKIN

RUSKIN writing
"Art is adoration."
To praise rocks, beetles
Or the courses of the stars
With wise hymns based on
"Natural laws."

... Impotent, they say,
With spells of
Actual paranoia.
Poor withered voice over
The passionate and bloody geologies
Of stone columns
Fronting the canals. . . .

"And in the recesses of the porches . . .
Knots of men of the lowest classes
Unemployed and listless. . . .
Their young eyes full of desperation
And stony depravity."

"Minute traceries which surround
Their most solid capitals;
Sometimes merely in a
Reticulated veil. . . .
Sometimes resembling a basket
On the edges of which
Are perched birds
And other animals . . ."

Consequently able
To spend hours
Watching the rain
Run down a heap of cinders.

"The Roman arch
And the beauty of abstract lines . . ."

SAN FRANCISCO 1934

"Professional agitators . . ."
Two slain: the workers put flowers
On the pavement,
Flowers where they fell.

Appeals for human rights
Whose actual purpose is . . .
Revolution!
(Flowers growing
Out of their dead bodies.)
"Additional troops
Where public peace and order
Have been threatened."

Bankers arrive
On roller skates.
The trooper's horse
Wears goggles.
Animals
Shall not weep.

And the map's veins
Run with strike,
Spreads,
Unfolding like a flower.

PROTESTANT BURIAL

(For my Father)

There are not enough vases
For all these flowers:
The house is gay
With stiff bright petals.

Authority to open
Grave No. 4, Lot no. 6078,
Section 61, Lake Plot
For burial
Of the remains of . . .
And loved the honesty
Of animals.

Believed in a
United States
That passed away
With Teddy Roosevelt.

"I am the resurrection
And the life . . ."
In which
No one believes.

What is reborn,
Reborn?

We shall no longer
Hoist the flag
On holidays.
The shutters
Will be closed for a long time.

H A Y S

This sharp sunlight
Gilds our faces
With a new color—
And the green grass.

ON READING “‘INTIMATE MEMORIES’”

Mabel Dodge Luhan
Was radical
But objected
When the newspapers called her
“An ardent socialist.”

Mabel Dodge Luhan
Desired the infinite
But compromised
In the boudoir
With John Reed.

When he left her
She wept
“More bitterly
Than the time when her heart
Was broken in Buffalo.”
And enjoyed feeling frail and sensitive
At lunch.

MANHATTAN

I have eaten the city.
I have seen myself in a thousand doorways,
Simple as light,

H A Y S

Single as crowds,
The air extinguishes my footsteps.
My skin surrounds the shadow of the monument.
The long afternoon,
Burning with women's beautiful dresses,
Flows with the tide of my blood.
Among the public privacies of the sunset
I can hear the dust falling.
The reflection of voices
Struggles to rise
Like a bird without wings.

I have eaten the city,
Surrounded by musical silence,
I have swallowed crowds of pigeons.
Grass grows on my eyelids.
My body is full of windows.

FOUR POEMS

WELDON KEES

SCREAM AS YOU LEAVE

RESTRICTED journeys and steam-heated dreams,
The mothball moment dropping like an iron
On crowded fringe of ground that hinges heart
And mind, suggesting codas to the start
Of twenty ends. The statues by the pool
Have varicose veins. Damp weather does it.

Consult the local seers as blue x-rays
Deposit profiles of the worms who ate
The rector's aphorism in a single swallow.
It happened on this weathered street, beneath a yellow
Pool of oil, where Christian Scientists cross fearlessly,
Their souls bound up in packages, like knobs.

And trapped among the toothpicks and the phallic
balloons
Where minor Caesars fell outrageously,
Impromptu unicorns enact ballets,
Applauded by bourgeoisie in negligée.
What are these dying blackbirds doing here?
The weather wrinkles to a shrunken end.

THE PARTY

The obscene hostess, mincing in the hall,
Gathers her guests around a crystal ball.
It is on the whole an exciting moment;

Mrs Lefevre stares with her one good eye;
 A friendly abdomen rubs against one's back;
 "Interesting," a portly man is heard to sigh.

A somewhat unconvincing oriental leers
 Redundantly; into the globe he peers,
 Mutters a word or two and stands aside.
 The glass grows cloudy with sulphurous fumes;
 Beads rattle, latecomers giggle near the door.
 A scene forms in the glass; silence invades the rooms.

The oriental glances up, conceals surprise
 At such immediate success. Our eyes
 Stare at the planes that fill the swelling globe,
 Smoke-blue; blood, shelltorn faces; suddenly a drum
 Begins its steady beat, pursues us even here:
 Death, and death again, and all the wars to come.

EARLY WINTER

Memory of summer is winter's consciousness.
 Sitting or walking or merely standing still,
 Earning a living or watching the snow fall,
 I am remembering the sun on sidewalks in a warmer place,
 A small hotel and a dead girl's face;
 I think of these in this higher altitude, staring West.

But the room is cold, the words in the books are cold;
 And the question of whether we get what we ask for
 Is absurd, unanswered by the sound of an unlatched door
 Rattling in wind, or the sound of snow on roofs, or glare
 Of the winter sun. What we have learned is not what
 we were told.

I watch the snow, feel for the heartbeat that is not there.

AUNT ELIZABETH

They lean in frames along the fading wall,
The hideous ancestors. While Aunt Elizabeth,
Imprisoned by *National Geographics*, cats, and air
Enclosing dead poinsettia plants, rocks slowly in the chair
Her mother died in. "And when the 'phone rang, Paul,"
She says, "I answered. There was no one there;
There was no one there at all!"

Her past is rearranged by hardening arteries,
The neighbors' dogs, ruining her flower bed,
Nieces' abortions, failing profits, and the dead, of course,
Their nerveless eyes along the wall. They were well-fed,
Expiring quietly among the parlor furniture or in some room
Upstairs, the older ones; two of them shot
In wars abroad; one of the girls
Stabbed herself with a paper-knife; but gently;
The wound healed.

"But you don't understand
The way it was!" says Aunt Elizabeth. "It's always
That way. I answer, and there's no one there!"
The window glasses out the afternoon.
Tall April weeds hold in the crumbling walk;
A broken trellis sags where yellow vines once grew.
And there has been no telephone in years.

"No one," she says, and rocks, and coughs,
Imprisoned by these photographs and memories.

TWO POEMS

ROBERT HIVNOR

TO AN UGLY GIRL I KNOW, SHUNNED BY MEN

I

SINCE there's no public for flowers
And nerve-ending sauce
Is not a Cause
Encyst love! Reverse the embryo
Let lips send it back
Let eyes send it back
Knuckles whiten with love gone back
Spine clean node with love gone back

Be crystalline, form-in-death.

2

When blood cools in pools
And the steam from the last temperature of human
blood
Thins fast on the first clear day without man,
Then from no memory drifts data back:
The house that was your house
And the river slipping, cool gray, by,
Covered with pollen from the weeds on the bank.

The river is gone and birds catch on fire.

For was it not good to live
A unity like a girl ape

HIVNOR

Like a unity of mental heat among so many degrees
of cold
Among shapes within and outside their ideas
Which is the dark that casts darkness.

It is in the center of the mind the pride
Even the sun is dark inside.

SONG FOR UTOPIA'S FIRST GENERATION

No, No, the Past is not fake dream-space,
Many a darling boy like you, piloted by the
unquestionably true,
Was lost in deep history without a trace—
Destinies were only for the few.
This Utopian state, this cubic Beauty,
Son, was a great pain's booty.

Bring me the History book transcribed for piano and voice
And we'll be human and happy, girls and boys!

Now all are women in the face—unterrific—to know
That the verbal thrust and the mystical throw
The idiot kings and the faithless wives,
The men with the power and the whores with the hives,
The hopes in battle, the minds of corporals,
The seller's descriptions and the buyer's morals,
Are but notes upon my music score.
Sometimes they please, sometimes they bore.

Bring me the History book transcribed for piano and voice
And we'll be human and happy, girls and boys!

H I V N O R

We'll space in sound and time the work of Gibbon,
Watch as ferocious ballerina
The brunette Christian and the blond lion
As they tug at a red ribbon.

Bring me the History book transcribed for piano, and voice
And we'll be human and happy, girls and boys!

Oh, the efficiency of that Cross!
—The plastic agony sweating moss,
Twisting to claim of ancient pain an air-bomb's worth
From perfection bound, a socialized earth.

How dramatically He threw the brain's rind away.
And they pitched dice (Used chance is gay).
Were they not imperiled to bury a
Love that knew no erogenous area?

Quick! Bring me the History book transcribed for piano and
voice
And we'll be human and happy, girls and boys.

Oh, the great men, the great men,
Who with morals and pain were cubic!
We lived in the evidences of their battle—
Now they are harmless . . .
They thought they were so political,
But they were only wombs of music.

Now, bring me the History book transcribed for piano and voice
And we'll be human and happy, girls and boys.

THREE POEMS

PAUL WREN

GRAVITY

NEWTON once stopped, they say, an apple's fall
by pure haphazard of his pulp and skull.
The grey physicist in the rose evening
walked home in gravity, in thought's own leavening:
the apple fell full on the thoughtful evening.

O greening sun among the ninny planets,
wry nest of time, incest of elements,
high on what bough by what hallucination
do you prefigure us? Your break and fall
declines the orbit that declines us all:
I break: you break: we fall.

And Newton, on the impact of an apple,
sees matter riot, remembers past the swirl
to a falling entity, ascends earth's branch
to incorporate the swing of elements.
For only so he sees himself the green
drowning thru space with motion not his own,
abstracts the root of insult, accident,
and tacks the esoteric on the fall.

High in the blooming leaves the ninny apple
quivers forever, mathematical
vessel of the infinite and green as gall,
that felt the physicist clump underfoot—
giant of apples, sunburnt walking skull
for whom the grave and positive matter fell.

GRANDFATHER GABRIEL

Grandfather Gabriel weighed twenty stone,
 he'd put his length to any depth in the county
 and out of chaos save his bitch a bone.

Grandmother Miriam was starched and laced
 by ten o'clock. Noon brought her breakfast.
 At two she had French of an exiled communist.

My good grandfather came home at six to catch
 my good grandmother barefoot to the neck;
 only the weather clothed her nakedness.

My good grandfather came home at six to catch
 the stale smell of fish which is so close
 to the first mysteries, and the last, of flesh.

He spoke circuitously upon the weather.
 Passing, he prosed upon those French ambassadors
 who know the subtler lineaments of pleasure.

Grandmother Miriam was shrewd as hell,
 she answered him in French, she answered ill:
Pas de leur on que nous, dôme brute, dôme belle!

But Gabriel, Gabriel was no man's ass.
 He saw a mountain where he smelled a mouse
 and took a cleaver to the moral impasse.

O an exquisite son of a bitch was granny's Franco!
 He hung on the weather seven golden days,
 betraying what he lacked where he lacked it, in falsetto,
 For the Word was flesh with one's heroic ancestors.

JOURNEY THE LONG WAY ROUND

I

When of the sum of our experiences
nothing remains but weather scarcely new,
think what we were, what elements of sense
burned in that crucible and as air as blue.
Be comforted of the texture of that time
long gone from touch and inaccessible
to the mind breathing perfume on the crime,
your heart that calls that spring back autumnal.

O then remember that impossible hour
when the air was feathered composite of wings,
remember music, the voice out of the flower
that spring and this and fifteen hundred springs,
remember the lake of stars, the hard shudder
of the flesh at night before and after water.

2

This roof builds over your head
and knits your heartbeats up.
All spring the stallion weather
rains petals in your lap.

Time's not your enemy
that ribs you with his own;
of twenty-seven past
who'd dream springs more than one,
who'd dream of the animal
whose sleep inhabits bed
the strength to crack Time's bone,
the guts to take his meat?

3

Rain spills on evening roofs
 its lapse of tether,
 and inenised of sleep
 the falling weather
 streams thru green apple boughs
 whose green it is.

Under the evening roofs
 our limbs together
 drown deep in sleep as leaves
 in the wet weather.
 Dreams spill from darkest boughs
 and green the mortal house.

4

O early in the morning we get up and go
 fantastically dressed.
 Earthworms are in our underwear and snow
 topples our list.
 Worlds wall us in, wool vacuums us warm,
 love aims our transit wide of every harm.
 But deep in evening the shrewd corpse comes home
 to burial of bed,
 lies in the cupola of sleep, its towers down,
 dreams in its head,
 lies all night long in the little of love's hand
 like something lost to language, love, land's end.

5

My heart beats at your door
 among fallen leaves.
 It listens, it does not care
 for the wind, the waves,
 the gulls upon feathers upon the whistling seas,
 the clouds gone upon lofty voyages.

Gentler than dusk I hear
 your shadow pool
 on the wide round of air
 whose moon at full
 choirs the wind and wet from where they brood
 in the dumb heart that dreams to be understood.

6

Call not the heart home yet
 to the narrow gate.
 Blue dusk breeds April in
 the lilac thicket:
 be spring to that sore animal,
 be summer, wait.

Time that's all bedlam of
 four certain seasons
 may have of sweetness left
 one drop, two raisins:
 let him suppose full summer and the grape
 with his own reasons.

Call not the heart home yet
 to the narrow breast.
 He hears wide water roll,
 he foams at his list:
 let the heart break of reason
 so builds his rest.

7

What brought me to the sea, the loud body
 slung all night long in batteries of sound,
 grit in the mouth (that bitter night) at breakfast,
 salt, current in the mind?

Sand, stones. And all perjured remembrance
 of much that was but little when it was.
 Sack of the body, the conduits of sense
 split open in the flesh.

And felt the frontiers swimming in my mind,
 cold from the polar straits thru straits of coral,
 and on some drowning inland heard the winds'
 processional of surf in the rumored shell.

And lay face downward in the infinite
 thru strident ups and downs, green sarabandes
 brought to a froth and burst, perpetual
 as the loud music dashed against her islands.

Loud music, islands, the unremitting treble
 dashed at the base of sound, the stricken roar
 of the mind's foam and hurry whose fall discloses
 white beaches on the stricken atmosphere.

8

Yet to this castaway and drowned of sense,
 O dour Cassandra, think no coming home.
 This was the house whose building imminence
 cracked and the floods came and the fools were gone.
 If, for an hour, suspension of the glass
 put off catastrophe as a cloud not rains,
 the furies pooled in the atmosphere, the grass
 was thick with poisons, doubt not, and green harms.

For in this polished artifice of mirror
 the human marrow founders like a stone,
 the cast of the loins drowns deep in the cold silver:
 this was the house Narcissus and not home.
 The cracked glass, the skyscraping towers
 are down now helplessly as any ours.

SIX POEMS

JAMES LAUGHLIN

FRAGMENT

... come out of the
station into the story-

book snow and there
they all are lined up

by their sleighs bowing
and greeting & touching

their caps with the
gold-lettered names—

Beau Soleil Alpenrose
Park Post and Adler

Beau Sejour Palace
Sport Continental &

if God loves me I'll
one day lie down again

under the unmanageable
feather puffs of the

Hotel Vierjahrzeiten
with the cold pitcher

& basin watching over
what is called a soul.

CRYSTAL PALACE MARKET

Saw a girl in a food-
store that looked like

you gave me the shakes
in my poor old heart

darling darling sings
the voice on the radio

darling why did we
ever drift apart big

giant food market full
of things to eat every

thing to eat that a
person could desire

but I guess I'll go
hungry hungry hungry

darling says the radio
why did we ever part?

A POEM WITH AN EXTRA LINE

I doubt if many other poets
will celebrate it but never-

theless I find worthy of
celebration the fact that

in the last few years there
has occurred a very unim-

portant social change I re-
fer naturally to the serving

of the salad prior to the
main course rather than

after it in restaurants thru-
out the length and breadth of

our long and broad land and
this fellow citizens is per-

haps a phenomenon to which
you have not devoted your

best thoughts but neverthe-
less I would like to point

out that it clearly portends
the ultimate arrival of the

human race at a Utopian con-
dition of social grace since

LAUGHLIN

it shows how functional utility will break down er-

roneous upper class conventions as friends it is

plain that people do need something to chew on while

steak & state are cooking

to let the old ship sink as pleasantly &

easily as possible because it was plain as

day you couldn't operate at a profit as

long as that man was in the white house &

now he was there for good you might just

as well fold yr hands and shut your face and

let the old boat take water till she sank.

WHAT THE PENCIL WRITES

Often when I go out I put in my coat pocket

some paper and a pencil in case I want to

write something down well there they are

wherever I go and as my coat moves the pen-

cil writes by itself a kind of gibberish

hieroglyphic which I often think as I un-

dress at night & take out those papers with

nothing written on them but strange and

meaningless marks is the story of my life.

HOW SAD

"It may not be yours but the grave is my

goal said to my still interested body my so

bored & overstuffed soul" tonight unex-

pectedly a bird sang very beautifully out

in the dark it made me jump up from my

chair of disgust & run out into the moonlight

of memories & fresh desires but soon the

bird stopped and I couldn't remember him

CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS

The president of the corporation was of the

opinion that the best thing to do was just

back so I just mixed me a nice comforting

drink of thinking of not having to be alive.

FIVE POEMS

NICHOLAS MOORE

POEM IN TIME OF SYMBOLS

YOU say a fig for Christian tears
Who know the bitter holly. Taste
The blood on the finger and die.
The berry is black. The raven
Flies like a symbol in your breast.

You say a fig for love. The holly
Is for my man, I do not care,
What holy stranger pricks God's ribs.
The battle of my lips is closed,
Figs for the yellow vultures are my eyes.

In the tuft of your body Christ hides,
Like a blow in the face of the lecher:
The symbol changes, becomes a blood rose.
In your eyes glimmer the quick swallows. Dear,
I forgive this chaste fig in your loins.

P O E M

Five lemons in a field, in my hand darling
the rose of your breast your tongue, two babies,
sing sing pretty maid all in a fairy boat, pears
ripe bursting browning pointed, two long ties
meeting in summer in between five lemons the
meeting in the lemon field with my hand
I hold you I keep you between my legs
I keep in the lemons the five mercies the birds
the disputing loves darling the five-lemoned tongue.

POEM OF SNOW

Frisk, tail of lamb, in Jesus' talented winter,
When glory was a thorn and blood fell.
Tell me of Christmas, the snow falling,
Did you whisper then or was it all snow?

Did the lamb bleed, or the frozen spikes of winter
Melt in the telling story that fell
To the shepherds in the field, the wind falling
On them like a voice from God or like the snow?

"If you will be better than bad, hide love's winter."
The voice of angels in blood on his bosom fell,
For the tears of the lamb in the cold falling,
Bitter on the shepherds' cheeks as snow:

And, Up, hands they held, For his tongue is winter,
Who speaks from the icy blast, whose blood fell,
Whispers of dying corpses in battle, falling
In heaps of their own dead, falling like snow.

Lie low, so sweet head. In my body is bed of winter.
Die here where the lions and the bravest fell:
For there is nothing but quiet and love in falling.
The dream is quiet, the head may be gentle too.

P O E M

Though sponsored by his pride
This heady humour left him dragged and worn,
Torn as a blindweed from its roots to air,
(Fingers the dismal soldier by the brook)
He died and left no heir.

Died of no casual drink
And kicked his gravesclothes off,

M O O R E

For half the world to know
This was their friend and foe,
Gallant gentleman to the widowed.

And left a ruby stone
To be pinned to the breast of a young girl
in her childhood,
That the twin breasts might grow,
And be graceful and good
The dear body, and not be alone.

P O E M

First pride in the moment of loss
For fourscore years or more
Racked out of history
In the people's memory of war
To be the hangman's lesson
And witches' mystery,
I fix my crossbones here
To mark our misery.

The cherry tree may hide
The cancer at its heart
But birds will leave alone
The flesh around the stone
And it will wither and die
In its disunity.

Gardener who washes it
With ribs of white
May lift his head and laugh
At the troubles of the worm,
But why should the fly care
Who bites into the bark?
The maggot in the heart
Carries a more terrible scar.

FIVE POLITICAL POEMS

JOHN BERRYMAN

RIVER ROUGE, 1933

Snow on the ground. A day in March.
Uncomprehending faces move
Toward the machines by which they live,
Locked; not in anger but in hunger march.
Who gave the order on the wall?
Women are there but not in love.
Who was the first to fall?

Their simple question and their need
Ignored, men on their shoulders lift
The loudest man on the night shift
To shout into the plant their winter need.
Who gave the order on the wall?
The barbed wire and the guns aloft.
Who was the first to fall?

Snow on the bloody ground. Men break
And run and women scream as though
They had expected human snow
And human audience, but now they wake.
Who gave the order on the wall?
Remember a day in March and snow.
Who was the first to fall?

THANKSGIVING: DETROIT

Lockout. The seventh week. Men in the Square
 Idle, but the men are standing as they stood.
 Thanksgiving is tomorrow. Shall Labour
 Rejoice? Or curse? Shall Labour spit that turkey?
 In an elaborate spot on Six Mile Road
The men at the bar and the women on the couches
Are dancing, drinking, singing vainly.

Thanksgiving. Shall the Liberal rejoice?
 Shall the pieces of the Liberal give praise?
 The Liberal is moving left, or rather
 The conflagration and the guns move right
 As the fuel and the ammunition blaze.
The men at the bar and the women on the couches
Are dancing, drinking, singing vainly.

Thanksgiving, and more than turkeys underground.
 Opinion underground. Who shall be glad?
 Finks and goons in the streets of the city, cops
 Clubbing and watching the clubbing of men, men hide.
 The standing men are determined and sad.
The men at the bar and the women on the couches
Are dancing, drinking, singing—vainly.

1939

THE DANGEROUS YEAR

Thus far, to March, into the dangerous year
 We have come safely with our children, friends,
 Parents, the unfamiliar crowd, and stare
 To make out the intentions of that man
 Who is our Man of Fear.

We have come safely. In a frontier brawl
A few men coughed who will not cough again,
Slaughter goes on in China, refugees call
For aid; but these things are remote, they can
Touch us scarcely at all.

We are secure behind the Northern Ocean.
Whatever folly we commit is blest
Beforehand by the god Exaggeration
Who is our genius—the advancing good
Simply to be in motion.

Strangers we do not trust, or wish would leave.
Communication has not made us one
As yet, we hope, with foreigners who live
Upon their nerves, perpetually ready
To triumph or to grieve.

Our factories and homes, the man next door,
Our dear upholstered memories, are safe,
We think. The situation is a bore,
But we have the Atlantic to safeguard us:
No plane can reach our shore.

The car is still upon the road, we say.
What road? Where will you sleep tomorrow night?
Where are the maps that you had yesterday?
By whose direction are you moving now?
The light is thin and grey.

It's time to see the frontiers as they are,
Fiction, but a fiction meaning blood,
Meaning a one world and a violent car.
It's time to think about the weekend, think
Whether the road is war.

Time to forget the crimson and the green
Tinsel upon the Christmas tree, the lake

BERRYMAN

Shining with summer friends where you have been.
Let all that fade, for you are come upon
The shifting of the scene.

Forget the crass hope of a world restored
To dignity and unearned dividends.
Admit, admit that now the ancient horde
Loosed from the labyrinth of your desire
Is coming as you feared.

Courage is not enough, but you must find
Courage, or nothing else can do you good.
It's time to see how far you have been blind
And try to prop your lids apart before
The midnight of the mind.

New York, 1939

1 SEPTEMBER 1939

The first scattering rain on the Polish cities.
That afternoon a man sat on the shore
Tearing a square of shining cellophane.
Some easily, some in evident torment tore,
Some for a time resisted and then burst.
All this depended on fidelity,
One was blown out and borne off by the waters.
The man was tortured by the sound of rain.

Children were sent from London in the morning
But not the sound of children reached his ear.
He found a mangled feather by the lake,
Lost in the destructive sand that year
Like feathery independence, hope. His shadow
Lay on the sand before him, under the lake
As under the ruined library our learning.
The children play in the waves until they break.

BERRYMAN

The Bear crept into the Eagle's arms and lay
Snarling; the other animals showed fear,
Europe darkened its cities. The man wept,
Considering the light which had been there,
The feathered gull against the twilight flying.
As the little waves ate away the shore
The cellophane, dismembered, blew away.
The animals watched and shook, the bear leapt.

COMMUNIST

'O tell me of the Russians, Communist, my son!
Tell me of the Russians, my honest young man!'
'They are moving for the people, mother; let me alone,
For I'm worn out with reading and want to lie down.'

'But what of the Pact, the Pact, Communist, my son?
What of the Pact, the Pact, my honest young man?'
'It was necessary, mother; let me alone,
For I'm worn out with reading and want to lie down.'

'Why are they now in Poland, Communist, my son?
Why are they now in Poland, my honest young man?'
'For the people of Poland, mother; let me alone,
For I'm worn out with reading and want to lie down.'

'But what of the Baltic States, Communist, my son?
What of the Baltic States, my honest young man?'
'Nothing can be proven, mother; let me alone,
For I'm worn out with reading and want to lie down.'

'O I fear for your future, Communist, my son!
I fear for your future, my honest young man!'
'I cannot speak or think, Mother; let me alone,
For I'm sick at my heart and I want to lie down.'

October, 1939

‘‘TO ASCEND THE MOUNTAIN’’

SAMUEL FRENCH MORSE

I

THE mountain wild with snow long into May,
Hemlock and apple and the ironwood,
The landscape alters seasonal and clear;
Blackberries ripen where the village stood.

The bright elixir spilling from the heart
To stain the afternoon with turkey-red
Where Amos fell, amazement in his eyes,
From the wide step, his belly full of lead;

Where Edward stumbled through the open door,
Crazed by the ambush death; and Susan screamed;
The headstones lean upon the vagrant grass
To mark the victory. The house that seemed

Far from the western night, the seething brand
Hurled into darkness at the last stockade
Had learned on peaceful hills how death remained;
The cold New England torrent and the shade

Narrowing through the early morning light
Down the steep glen, brought nothing to this land.
Only in May when cornel and the moss
Grow rich in damp, the wary fox will stand

By the sagging door the breathe the afternoon,
And rouse the partridge from the ruined fields
Where berries ripen and the apples rot
In silence calm as that the sunlight yields.

M O R S E

2

But Susan Arnold lived to see her house
Raised to a mansion through the golden age;
They built a decent quiet into walls
Burdened with violence and heritage;

She heard once more the thunder of that spring
When Amos felled the timber for the rooms
Lost, now, among the colored lithographs,
The hall fantastic with magenta blooms.

The sofa, and the crimson portieres,
Her sons grown serious with industry;
They talked with elegance of bonds and cash,
And stripped the upper slope of the last tree

To live by dividends. The house decayed.
Dust gathered on the foreign picture frame
Where Amos Arnold, caught in some wild trance,
Had looked too long, too idly on the name

His sons and grandsons bore, infatuate,
Dreaming a profit endless as the lines
Spun to drifting smoke by the upper winds
From fires that blazed through wreckage of the pines

In the great brush left by a hundred men,
A slash to arid sun where land was cheap.
They bought securely, bargaining with cash
For the cool gain that quieted their sleep.

They read the journals, wound the marble clock
Brought from Lucerne to grace the living-room
Like Wordsworth, and the novels on the table,
Tempered and civil, unconcerned with doom.

But now the outcrop glittered. Fireweed
 Blossomed like madness down the formal path
 From the Gothic mansion. This was enough.
 Panic alone could be the aftermath.

3

The market fell. Floods wrecked the land that spring
 The Democrats took office; and the strike
 That had to come in time, had jammed the logs
 Upstream. "Do anything, do what you like,"

John Arnold said. That month he closed the mill.
 The dividends and mortgages would go,
 And perhaps the house that faced the northern sun
 Across the April valley wild with snow:

He turned the ledger back a hundred years.
 They had wrecked the town; time would rust the axe
 Quivering in the stump where the late frost
 Gathered like pitch to force a mortal tax

With bitterness. Nobody would collect
 A piddling profit from the second growth—
 A hundred years? He closed his desk. Amen.
 This was the judgment rendered for the sloth

Reason and power acquired at a price.
 But this would change, now there was talk of war;
 The righteous generations had not worn
 Virtue for nothing. What was virtue for?

John Arnold drove to Concord; he had need
 Of cash, as well as a name and a good cause.
 The Capitol smiled on her native son,
 And made the loan with politics and clause:

M O R S E

The state would serve a man who served her well.
At least white pine had given him renown
Secured with promises, and equal terms.
John Arnold closed the house, and moved to town.

4

The fox moves through the evening like a ghost
While night-hawks cry above the ruined shed;
The well is rank with leaves; the years of dust
And silence yield the fallen pine its bed.

Only the hunter makes a human noise
When idle gunning leads his footsteps here
Where time has sealed the parlor for the bees
And sunlight burns across the cold frontier.

AN UNPUBLISHED SECTION FROM

THE GHOST IN THE UNDERBLOWS

ALFRED YOUNG FISHER

For G.N. & L.C.P. & W.R.

‘ The Book and writer both
Were love’s purveyors. In its leaves that day
We read no more.’

Inferno iii.

I

THERE is a gap of time, season and of many generations
The last the first fire rolled up like fog
Filling my mouth with silence and my eyes blind.
There is a gap too from city to city, and the winds
Have plucked the berries of spring, and the autumn leaves
Fall now on the wires heaven whistles winter,
Filling with gauzy frost also the hearth of the soul.

Some months now since my head was warm,
Some months since the speaking stones told me secrets,
When these were times of despair, absence, moments of longing,
Times of generations brewing from Adam to those dwelling in
The house of their fathers.
Many wars of god in these few seconds of eternity,
Many deaths too, many priests, many slayings of lions in the
Snowpits,

Many sendings abroad, bringings of arks, several Davids,
Many Philistines also, and many hearts pumped full of agony;

Many generations of ideas, philosophies, notions
 From Adam to silence, many and even final fermentations,
 Final judgments in the earth, many paradises,
 Movements of the inner world, shifting of the full sea . . .

The trees of the woods have sung from green to white
 And where there were stumps, there are shoots pressing;
 All bastard things flourish, even the intervals,
 There is a bridge of time down from rotten piles over the strear
 And the full rivers wait for the freshets.

What shall be said of the new day? That it is old,
 And that I dreamed of a greater than personal incest.
 It brewed like beer, with rats in the vat,
 And turned like a leavened loaf to swell itself;
 It frothed like spittle on the lips of a Greek poet,
 And oozed occasionally like sap from the split tree.

There is no word for incest but all life in the origin
 And no word but the acceptance of inner necessity for life.
 Should I ever please the people if I did not tell what the fire
 With its polysyllables and vocable soft tongues on the firebrick

No. I could never sing a song without my heart
 Where are the lethal chambers of sleep.
 Never might I, O, never! be less than those plucked tendons
 Of the harp of my brain and fingers.
 I refuse similitude, for there is no need.

Accustom yourself to your own pulse,
 To the drum of it, to its close disgrace,
 To the ripping of the golden buttons of glory
 And the moonbright sword from the flank of the soul;
 To the roll of the muffled drum, to the death of the heart.

O my heart! What is it to march alone in innocence?
 What is it to see the lifted eyebrow of pride
 Or the stone walls of outer disgrace?
 There is in the chamber always a shaft of darkness
 And though there be vermin, there is a crumb of light;
 There is spiderous, friendly silence, too, and denial.

My cigarette is crushed on the ashtray,
 But I see rising still a rope of smoke,
 And presently I shall light another fag
 From the ancient fire.

2

Where are the houses of the great? In cedar?
 Under the blue curtains?
 What are their names? Who are the great?

In other days things were great in the land
 Lighted by darkness, campfires and those hills
 On which rested planetary lights like candles in the aisles of trees
 And in the holy corridors of wind;
 But latterly the houses went under protection and keys
 Though there was no storm in the air nor heavenly fire
 Nor ghosts under the knobs.
 There was no holy place of secrecy, none where one
 Might silently sit before the judgment and reality of himself.
 All exterior form, the rotten core in the fruit
 Rosy under the banquet lamp; there, mostly the carcasses;
 There mainly the words not the word. All according
 To what was heard, like a dog scratching
 Or the gems of a bright but impermanent fire
 Rustling for color and sound.

Never from the laned gardens of the brain one blossom un-
 withered,

F I S H E R

Neither the rose of Sharon nor the Corinthian violet
Nor the mossed oakbark out of California uplands.
Instead, blooms of thistle, sharp flowers of words
But no flower, no green, no life.
They are sometimes but glass petals tinkling on the reflecting
 centerpiece
Or tears like round pearls of dew, but not dew—
Distilled and colored perfume of pretension!

Rather would I humanity should boast of its garbage,
The dung of its thought than that it should
Fail recognition of what beauty is;
Rather too the constructions of philosophers
Should be less construction than philosophy
Than that one world of an atom of life should be unbeautiful.

If I were dead would it not be another proof
Of self-sufficiency, of power over the flesh?
But why need I prove what I cannot help?
Death creates vision, brews dream, ghosts
And ineffable values
Which mutter, grow ordered, and fall still.
May I commence life with the truth as I see it,
As I hear the immense orchestra of light play down the slopes
And the sounding of trumpets under the sea in the world's
 center!

Echo sifts upward, forms close
As the cloak on my cold shoulders.
Where are the remembrances of what all must be?
In the philosophy, the bloom, of nightshade
Plucked under the roots of that old forest
Where the great lived; in the coals from campfires
Where glooming spirits chant in a circle
And a chaplet of stars caps the wind walking the treelanes.

Do I need constructs to find out blossoms
 Under leaves in the summer wood?
 Do I need pretension to find Dorian petals,
 The plant of Love and the tragic tears in the laned grove?

3

There were three choices that day: famine, consumption or three
 days of God's pestilence;
 And there were three flowers in the field,
 Three teeth in the old wolf's head, three fingers on a hand,
 Three drops in three cups, three fleas on three dogs,
 Three persons in the godhead, three mites on three fleas,
 Three this, three that, three zeros in all.
 The punishing silly deity!
 Does he not know, being more than infinite, that he
 Has not three aeons to live?
 Why does the angel come with a sword over Philadelphia
 Standing betwixt earth and heaven, when people in sackcloth
 Go about gnawing their knuckles for bread and for something
 to do?
 I tell you there are rising men's brothers, the tribes
 Before whose clarified eyes the archangel's sword will melt in
 his hand,
 And there will follow down from the clouds,
 From the pestilence in heaven, the whole miserable crew
 Of winged and whiteplumed buzzards.

O, it is beautiful
 To see on a summer day, what time the midday sun
 Rests in the shade for sleep, to see sifting down
 Like sudden soft snow over a hill the feathers of angels!
 They cannot long stand the prurience of the working earth
 And rot into those black clods one sometimes sees
 In an Irish peatbog. They are good for something, then!

Better a thousand times these pestilential birds
 Than the purity and alabaster of those halls
 Where sandaled-in-white, all-pallid things
 Spin righteousness upon silken tendrils of air.
 Let these become our earth! Let such become the stones!
 Let them be chants among trees, songs over grass,
 For in this earth where things go to destruction
 The variously postulated god will die
 And so with all. And I offer myself thanks
 For this foundation of beauty. Scorn then
 And be certainly immortal, you will have your reward!
 I had rather lay my head on a boulder in the dry Los Angeles
 river
 And sleep until waters cover me dead
 And the frogsmelling willows and the wrappers from cans
 Cover my drowsed brain than couch on innerspring mattresses
 Of goosedown theology and copulative eschatology.

What is order? It is vision, not proof.
 Give me that sleep on a stone in full desert
 To the three times three times three, the ternary
 Of father son and holy ghost. I multiply them by zero
 For all the sons of god to count. But men need bread
 And not bread alone, as the good scripture saith . . .

4

I saw three songbirds like three ruffled men
 Against a wall of snow in Strasbourg.
 There was nothing to eat, not a grain from horsedung,
 And an altar was reared in a threshing floor
 Of a man unknown these days, who gave
 Bees for sacrifice, the gum of their fat, his threshing instru-
 ments
 For hot fire. This was given. The altar was touched with visior-
 ary fire

And the three birds ate until their sweet hearts burst like those
of venerable men.

And so hot was the fire on the altar of charity
That it burnt all. There is now no threshing floor left
Nor a feather of the singers, nor one of their quick eyes.
But the ruin of charred instruments can be seen in black
Like carbon of planets sprinkling the stones of a certain square
And as for myself, I found one bird's foot that had walked in the
streets of air

And one shell beak that had piped in the wind's teeth.
They were sharp and uncharred and for me a precious remem-
brance

Since they were reminiscent of what creates beauty.

No beauty without mortality, for nothing without it
And what most lives, with death at the core, is beauty.
Not finely, at the moment, but crudely, not in the forms of poesy,
Not, for myself or possible critics, in eighteenth century pebbles
Or in glass baubles or in the rolled melodic, but rudely:
Open an ash bucket down some alley of the ways,
Watch wagons collecting remains—pleasures past,
The warmth of a family hearth and that page of the Englishman
beginning,

"These our actors
As I foretold you, were all spirits and
Are melted into air, into thin air:
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision . . .
Leave not a rack behind . . .'; and too
The strophes of that Sophocles whose marble forms
Are music; and the newer music of certain American poets;
The tattered letters of old love and the dry verbena
Left by a grandmother to her children;
And the fallen petals of geranium or asphodel
That gleam still by a cellar casement (what time

The tax collector comes to find the lodging full of dust)—
 Watch wagons collecting remains, I say,
 And not too much thought recreates creating beauty.

This is to be recorded: out of transformed atoms, glory
 No matter the particular smell of the transformation;
 Out of the ashes of fire, roses of ash
 And the shells of the singing things.

5

Prepare for the house of beauty in peace and rest
 Which, though they die, die slower than thought;
 From father to son let us, through our deep life,
 Die making beauty, the longest lived of all being,
 The final trumpet over the waves of the atoms of air
 And the great sea on the farthest shore.

Gather emptyheaded stone and shottenhearted man
 To listen to musical thoughts in a ring:
 Earth, rain, other stones and men and her, that life
 Who lives by one's heart, love, quietly breathing;
 These, final parents of all, things last dying,
 Creators of disintegration, incest and the being of beauty out
 of beginning—
 Gather these.

Gather all makers of passionate destruction,
 All those who love to do the deed, either in early May
 When joyful weeds are beds, or in cold betwixt cold sheets
 When outside fly rooks to their stormy nest;
 Gather these makers of mortality, transmigrators of
 New life to brain and the chaste palms of death;
 Gather these sowers of humanity in prepared fields,
 Collect all barren plants seeded in snow,

F I S H E R

Crystals I mean that grow like flowers on glass.
Let fructification like rain be the jewel!

Skeletal hills when vultures of dynamite
Have beaked their hearts to pebbled bone;
The icicles of music tiptapping rhythm;
Gather these and gather too
The ideas glooming in the Hesperides
Between such leaves as only those have seen
Who long search in the interior brain.

Gather the twangling music heard of the night
And the still word of the dying Sphinx's lips
And the nickname secrets told by the winds in the mountains;
Of life, nothing indifferent (though in orders) take letters—
The signs on beermugs, on packets of matches that give blue
flame—
And take the letters Omega and Alpha too, the last and the first;
And take the loud words too, from soapboxorators in parks
And the voice of thunder out of the braying cloud
And the stupendous voice of conscience . . .

Let us die hearkening to life out of incest, out of god's will that
we should all descend from Adam.

STRASBURG,
I-XII-1931

JEAN SANS TERRE DECOUVRE LE POLE OUEST

IVAN GOLL

*J*EAN sans Terre emmène les Gens sans Terre
Qui n'auront jamais eu ni porte ni fenêtre
Mais à peine un grabat pour mourir et pour naître
Et la chienne de l'ombre léchant leur misère

*Ils s'en vont sur la route millénaire
Montant la maigre rosse de l'espoir
Bouillant de la fièvre jaune du soir
Se nourrissant de lait noir d'herbe amère*

*Ils quittent la maison droite et la rue athée
Les boutiques d'oubli les usines hantées
Et l'arbre de sagesse en fleurs
Où l'on pendait leurs frères et leur peur*

*Les boulangers vendaient des pains de cendre
Les maçons cimentaient la dalle avec leur sang
Et les bouchers portaient leur tête à l'abattoir
Tandis que la bouchère expiait au comptoir*

*Ils connaissaient le code des raisons humaines
Tâtant le boeuf archaïque à la queue
Palpant la truite à l'oreille de feu
Evaluant la pulpe la peau et la graine*

*Maintenant par la tempête harassés
Sous la neige de braise et sous le vent du mythe
Pourchassés par les trompettes du Scythe
Et par le blizzard d'yeux trop aiguisés*

GOLL

*Jean les emmène hors du temps et du doute
Hors des cités de fer des tours pharaoniques
Hors des bas-fonds des corridors obliques
Le long des nonchanlantes routes*

*Quand l'ange vieillissant leur montre la colline
Annonçant la conquête du Pôle Ouest: Alors
L'oiseau-lune lance ses plumes d'or
Sur le sommeil des siècles qui s'animent*

*Les Gens sans Terre ici fondent Westopolis
Les boutiques d'oubli les usines hantées
Les mêmes maisons droites dans la rue athée
Et l'arbre de sagesse où l'on pend les amis*

Jean sans Terre retourne à l'aube seul vers l'Est

[TRANSLATION]

JOHN LANDLESS DISCOVERS
THE WEST POLE

JOHN LANDLESS leads his landless folk
Who never owned a window nor a door
Scarcely a cot to birth in and to die in
And the hound of their shadow at their heels

They walk along the road of centuries
Riding the faded mare of hope
Burning with yellow fever every night
Black milk and bitter herbs their food

G O L L

They leave the righteous house the godless street
The lethal stores the haunted factories
They leave the flowering tree of knowledge
On which they hanged their brothers and their fears

The bakers baked at last but bread of ashes
The masons mortared tombstones with their blood
The butchers took their own heads to the porkhouse
While their wives cried and leered behind the counters

They knew the code of human reasons
Touched the archaic oxen at his tail
And felt the trout around his garnet ear
Getting the pulp the skin the grain

And now pushed by the storm of hatred
By scorching snow and by the wind of myths
Chased by the trumpets of the Scythian wrath
And by the blizzard of sharp whetted eyes

John Landless led them out of time and doubt
Out of the iron cities and the pharaoh towers
Out of the depths the oblique corridors
Along unheeding roads

An aging angel showed to them the hill
Announcing them the conquest of the West Pole
The moonbird flew and shed his golden feathers
Over the stirring sleep of centuries

The landless founded here Westopolis
The lethal stores the haunted factories
Again the righteous house the godless streets
And trees of knowledge where to hang their brothers

At dawn John Landless fled alone back to the East

THREE POEMS

SANDERS RUSSELL

I

NO REAL thrush, star, nor field
can separate me from this nakedness
for I am a world down there;
it is enough, truly enough, to be wrong,
I am the only wrong one
without benefit of walls;
let the power be manifest within the shadow:
the obscure mother prepares the event.
The sun is drawing water,
the moon is swollen with rings,
the eye is drawing poison,
the heart is lying down,
the blood is caught in peninsulas.
One touch is all touch,
yielding less and less,
exploring dooms of music.

2

By the act of lowering a white card
I move into the shadow of desire:
their legs move in a cloud of wickerwork.
they break down plant stems
some penetrate the great tubes
leading up to roses.
I love their engines creating a blue spot
on the skin between my eyes.

They have held a seance
with their kneecaps touching.
I walk about
to pet the dwarfs projecting from their skin
and lock their wrists within my ring of focus.

3

This building is constructed with an Erector set
there is an intercrossing of steel girders
there are tensions between the groups of girders
at each third group there are rungs for flower pots
the sun shines through the scaffolding
there is continual organic change of girders.
In the mental image of the world
all transformations are possible;
circles are drawn in a white area
prepared for explosion: the meaningless
abstract patterns, condition
necessary for a certain kind of death,
for those who love the object too discriminately.

Love continually creates its area
out of the habit of out-touching
where the Body is being shared,
is actually being created—the world is filled with it
like moonlight or cotton gauze;
the air is filled with marjoram like snuff or semen,
filled with the small pepper dots that make me weep;
I feel the tattoo of roses.

THREE POEMS

ARTHUR BLAIR

THE UNIVERSE OF THINGS

INTERPLAY of objects:

your mind becomes
Quiescent as each event searches for
Its connotation in the universe
Of things. But do not speak; what is here
For contemplation displaces the air
Easily; and, as light or shadow, may
Be moved about, turned, placed in a new
Perspective.

Now (with due regard) forsake
Relationship: act into encounter:
Easily each object moves into the
Universe without a name, a counter
To communicate. And this is new,
An art in difficulty. The object
Is a stone to unobstruct.

And yet
A child in simple gratitude remarks
Upon the weather as of change. Each thing
Your mind contaminates is evident
Beneath the attitude's dissection:
Yet not spoken so.

The universe
Of things: and no longer objects are the
Attitudes feeding your quiescent mind.
Eyes ascertain a true relationship
As of now:

not before; never after.

THESE FORETOLD THE IMAGE

Some fought abstract reverie

And others conceived in speech
Immediacy: knowledge to fall, stones
Dropped to unify conclusions.

Lorca spent passion's poison
In the word: to find existence
Buried in a dream's mythology.

Rilke drained embittered spleen,
Felt it also: but dared forget
Before creation's ardent envy.

Tattered Yeats forgot also,
At least remembered alone, towering
Into the night, speaking young

Ardent thoughts to the young:
But aged and racked with hate,
Dying to know privation.

These three and many others
Tore the clutch of history: felt
Their conquered bodies shelled

In the conquest of an image.

SPECULATION AMONG SPARROWS

The Emperor is childlike.
His beatitude has covered centuries
With adulterate learning.
But this madness is nothing new:

BLAIR

In the tomb many elements exist,
Private, exposing the question,
Difficult to fathom. The Emperor
As teacher: the whole to function.

But it is easy to be uncertain.
The Emperor says: *To ascertain
The whole admit on incongruity.
Each must function in the whole.*
Sparrows to notice are a portion

Of the eye's experience.
The Emperor is blind. It is
Easy to question uncertainty.

The Emperor is childlike.
His voice is static as its range
Is ascertained. The Emperor
Is deaf. Decay can be uncertain.

The Emperor says: *The past is real,
—Fingers touch as hands grasp—
The present is illusion. The past
Is whole, admits no incongruity.*

The Emperor is old. He is wont
To judge by past experience.
*The whole, he says, must function
As the whole and as the part.*
But it is easy to be uncertain.
The Emperor is childlike,
Speaking ancient learned words:
In the tomb is no uncertainty.

FIVE POEMS

GEORGE KAUFFMAN

LIPS OF THE WORLD

from
the
throat
of Europe

from
the
slaves
of colonies

from
the
factories
of America

lips
of the world
are moving

lips
of the world
are feeling. . . .

soviet
soviet
soviet!

KAUFFMAN

SONG

I
am a leaflet

(they worked until
2 in the morning
cutting stencil
running me
drinking coffee)

I
am a leaflet

(oh wind
blow me around
factories
subways
relief stations
cottonfields
dustbowls
neighborhoods)

I
am a leaflet

America!
here
is your cause
here
is your heart
here
is your voice

I
am a
workers' leaflet!

K A U F F M A N

S P A I N

Madrid was a wound
one thousand years deep
swollen with the pus of
feudalism
but the scalpel of democracy
cauterized by the heat of struggle
lanced the fester of the
centuries
and the agony of Spain
becomes encased
in the scar-tissue
of world revolution.

Y O U A R E M Y S U N S H I N E

What if it comes by C.O.D.
by nothing down 6 months to pay
it's all the same it's all the same
the bills are always due
what if you beat the chinaman
or play a longshot on the nose
it's all the same it's all the same
you're lucky only once
what if it comes by night or day
or in the mail or under the door
it's all the same it's all the same
the rent is paid in cash
and when it comes (oh yes it comes)
what will you do what will you do
question
mark.

K A U F F M A N

LETTER TO MOTHER

(Never sent)

I warm my hands around the cup of coffee
It is empty, but still the warmth
makes me feel safe (now my rent is paid,
my food bought, my job still goes. . .)

Oh, how I hate to feel the cup
go cold between my hands.

I get up and go out and bum
another dime for a bed again.

TWO POEMS FROM "ACELDAMA"

HUGH CHISHOLM

I

THERE is always more for the speeches and publications,
More of the quarter truths for the more than half deaf,
More air for the big boys to belch for the cuties to prate
 In quotations. The warp has been raping the woof.
 Nuts and their bolts copulate
 At five thousand revolutions per,
 And out of their well-oiled fornications
 The laws for living pour.

So the trucks whip their drivers, the dams condemn their kings
To death by drowning, the Chairmen of the Boards
Are crucified on their dynamos. The gala
 Joe can enjoy, the dollar bards,
 And the ice-box: but it's no Valhalla,
 Nor even the more attractive Hell.
 Now is the vacuum between things
 And thinking, the Black Hole.

It was all in the cards, the advances, the lunches, the bids,
The crooked contracts, the manufactured hate
Dumped on the market, the doomed and leaning tower.
 Yet no giant is bullying us to bite
 And scratch, no superhuman power
 Lures us to evil like the elves.
 We are the way the good forbids,
 Playing with ourselves.

In us the mortifying How describes
Subhuman circles, turning, turning in
On Where like some sleepless, hopeless propellor shaft

CHISHOLM

In the bowels of a tanker at sea. And on
And on the laughing waters aft
Point out the telltale course, then close
Over the messboy's tasty bribes
And the suicide's clues.

O across the abyss of impossible, limpid space,
Between the planets and the precarious stars,
Always slithers the Purpose, whose least breath
 Fires the naive shepherd's tears
 And freezes the lovers' love for death
 And drowns the virgins in their bliss.
But always the sheep's idyllic face,
And the lie, are there to bless.

We live forever in the fever's ice:
Our dream is doomed, is doomed to move in rhythm
With paleolithic drum and prophetic fife
 Whose music we refuse to fathom,
 Whose resurgent, urgent life
We deny. Let the monsters neigh
Once, or the spirits whisper twice,
And watch us turn away.

2

You in the straw hat, you gentle in the fierce sun, you, horse,
What do you think? Is anything thicker to us than the pain?
Pulling your black victoria with the vermilion leather seats,
 what do you think of them, of us?

You see the signals of noon, the silence white, and the win-
dows shut,
You hear the afternoon omens, remember the locusts'
 remembered cry,

CHISHOLM

Catch the beggars stirring in their grey cathedral shadows,
and up from their grey sleep,
The laborers stretching and scattering crumbs on the pavement.
Watching, you can hum the Tuscan, familiar street song
That's calling them back to life, the quick, and the dead back to
fresh
weeping for decisions

Dried thin and yellow in a land where suns are motionless.
But what do you think of us, the quick ones with the passionate
eyes,
Eyes that from childhood grower older and wilder and darker
with love,
and crooked with looking for love?

Of the tampering fingers, exploring, appraising, and brazenly
adamant
When, through the telegraphic nerve, the tropical naked body's
Message stutters at first, then bursts like a preying leopard from
hope
to pitiless, pitiable desire?

Do you see the Devil, in crimson, with horns and tail,
Or do you call it Nature and let it go at that?
But we've rubbed out the Devil with wisecracks and healthy
ribaldry,
and God and His angels

Litter the parlors of spinsters, the holes of priests, and the old
curiosity shops,
With velvet debris. And we are, after all, the heirs of Adam and
Eve,
And Abel and Cain who fought to the death for the lie she gave
them:
and we are fighting still.

CHISHOLM

And by now we are not even intimates of seasons:
Discharged from the garden's potent innocence, we cherish
Impotency of mesa and canyon, comfortable in the bad lands and
using winter

for complaint, the blossoming spring

For onanism. So, desperately clever, invention has been invented
To hack at the land with ingenious destruction, to render the sky
glib,

To probe from the underseas mysteries the commonplace of yet
another pearl

on sale in the market for a song.

The fields are dust, and the pastures: the mansions crawl with it:
lust is dusty

With intellectual complications, and death with scientific
theories.

What do you make of us, horse, who have lost even the original
and final power for sorrow?

A SELECTION OF POEMS

CHARLES SNIDER

THE UNIFORM

THE draftee was almost too tall for the door.
'We aim to please.' The assistant-quartermaster
sizes him up. 'We can care for any bastard
but Tom Thumb and Paul Bunyan in this store
this time . . . Your Uncle Sammie—he aint poor.
Try this. It's brand-new—made for you.' This taster
of enclosures for the first time—and the last—towered
but the uniform was a match for him. He grinned
feeling secure for the first time in his life
after the rods and jails and no warm wife
beside him. This was snug. He put his hand
into his pocket. It felt warmer. He drew it out
as he might his thing from joy—with something finned—
or flesh—another soldier's hand . . . like sauerkraut.

HAMLET

When this drive's done I'll get me a whore
and it'll be April, dogwood and redbud
in the bottoms: he chewed this over like a cud
whacking away at the wood, clean to the core.
A year with canned food at this company store
and damn little money considering how much blood

SNIDER

and lonesomeness a man sweats in frozen mud—
'Look out SHE's COMIN!' . . . down to the shore
on the thawed river—and free—as you and me—
in a month—'Did you hear what I said, Ed—we'll be
free—free of these shapes and these alone
ghosting at you before it's decent dawn—
Ain't you glad—Ed?' The other said above the roar:
'A MILLION WHITE PINE COFFINS' WHAT'S THESE FOR.

LINE TO BE SCRIBBLED ON THE EVE
ON A RECRUITING POSTER OF UNCLE
SAM DEMANDING: I NEED YOU!

Like a bulldog amid dogstoothviolets at the
floodtide of change in spring, he was standing
stockstill like winter or an ancient heavenly
cosmology—or vase of some dynasty of Ming
wrinkled with crackles but basically still sound
(when packed in excelsior or mulch upon the shelf)
watching with one eye this thing leap from the ground,
remembering his old pirate days of pelf
before he built the wall to keep the other
pirates out and got to thinking much about
his wisdom teeth, prostate, disguise, his angel mother
(and fathers) and newstyle fairies, wormed with doubt.
Compliant not yet, believing in godsend
to God's Own Country still, hating combines
(unless as Defense Trusts) he feareth most of all
composite plants of fall against his fall.

LIED OF THE AVIATOR

You, in whose well shaped skull the senses
are disciplined cool and clean as watchworkings,
you of the trained eyes and the gnarled
tense fingers—yours indeed are all the futures.

You will go a thousand miles an hour
in time—faster than time—new perspectives, new
positions of the world yielding under your
strength as the woman to the decisive man.
You have two bodies now, two brains,
a million eyes. Your blue shaven
face heads into the screaming wind. You have been
unkind, letting shriek fierce bombs from your
dual entrails down to flatten
pampered unrealistic motheaten towns.
As a physician cutting away the stinking
tissue of a morbid cancer,
as you pain you cure,
as you ram the erective phallus of your vigor
into the soft woman belly, you make endure.

The young men in their goodfitting suits, their helmets
survey the fuselage in the making, standing together
in cooperative groups outside the hangar
reading the symbols of the sharp, meticulous
blueprints, the thorough fitting together
of part to part, the welding of amazingly
slender tethers, the hatred of deadweight
whether banker or skyscraper
or the load on a plane or the awkwardness of the untrained
now you taxi
now you take off

SNIDER

as a young swimmer stripping for a plunge
or a young lover in the marriage bed
giving yourself
to the atmosphere, bathed by the cool clouds, heading
toward the sun with your destiny that all the stars
gape at, that the God (who was so like a jungle savage's
fetich or his great calendar stones or iron coins
to be set up in squares and bled before)
crumbles before now, stricken by your lean thunder.
Firebirds, rattle your metal wings, cleansing air with thunder.

TO ULYSSES IN BYZANTIUM
OR IN ANGORA:

In rocky places saxifrage and genus of herbs
sooths pain from the carcase of remote ages, spring
converting into organic substance the solid rock
and the darkness. The ice has scoured in a series of
travels whole country provinces to quagmire and she
has waited among the earthenware pots—Penelope
taking care of the building. His genitals
have hung like unblown bagpipes while his fingers
grazed on cards or interposed dice. Undrained
he lay in the excreta of negligence, and she
in an antistrophe of barbs against bastardies
behind grilles. The Baltimore oriole builds again
the nestlings in the cumuli. The city
is re-engraved, the areas strewn with sand and buttercups
built up now, the boundaries changed, buttons
moved over. The population has forgotten
the navigations as Portugal. In rocky places

saxifrage and fleabane on the footing of peace
 see the beginning of growing light of the
 sun from camouflage, the last descent of ice
 candied in slush. Brittle houseboats like windflowers
 spread out in the sun on the nerves of the rivers.
 There is bearing of apples again. The young men
 run naked out of the gymnasium, the spears cloven,
 inscriptions again on buildings. Aie! come home
 for the buntings are back in a multitude and the laws
 stratify like the rocks restraining and balancing
 and the burgomaster plans again to lay out
 sewers. This is a free city again and with share
 holders. They are saying there is
 one God and that he chooses a certain number
 for eternal life and leaves the rest to eternal
 death. Ulysses! I have waited in the upholstered
 armchair twelve years since the republic was in
 violent agitation. I came face to face with no man
 and was no instrument for the winds when the masses
 moved past my door as clouds. I basted
 my affections into a responseless binding of iron,
 glass, and porcelain, almost turning to bone.
 But now it is not heroic to do so longer.
 Saxifrage is scattered about the rocks like
 money this spring. There is little lust. Entertainment
 is chilled with bog-trotting peasants and barrel-organ
 tunes. And some are cynics after the Huns.
 Who cares whether or not I raise a crop between rows
 of another? I am sick of being decent
 going on two decades, the bread like bricks.
 In mutilated rut, I wait in the sun, as butter diminishing.
 Aie! Ulysses, come home.

RESUSCITATION OF FREYA

The first day of May and the seven
 archangels like muscovy ducks come down
 inflamed with roundness and sculptured
 tracery, with purity and magnetic
 intratomic hegemony. In the flowery
 Kingdom of department stores and compassion
 shall we slay suddenly or unawares
 a Communist or cancel his tuition?
 Who but Dionysus would be allowed
 to speak for cannibalism on a public
 corner in Troy? We hesitate. We fuse
 as in a stockade for prisoners on the
 march in Russia, conspiring to conserve
 and harden the sap to burl as long
 as possible. The Great Bear and the Little
 candelabrum their embusque over
 Canada and Traverse City. Deodorized
 and dequeened we dance around our pole
 as Mongols around a wall. With fatty
 tumors and more like geraniums than
 mountain laurel we coin the reverse
 and model in shops again like youths
 hungering for deception. Flash and play
 of light, the bride, the Ascension
 done. A flask-shaped silence with infused
 venom, the collectivism of intestinal
 worms that is Time, and between the acts
 little cigars and preparations of
 medicines. Then to cover our camp with a
 small mound against our enemies, the
 Persians or Riffs, the lotions and opiums
 without effect, the Hall of Fame
 a dietary fad, the closeups coarse,

the kinship through the mother questionable
 and flattery not so fine as a hypo-
 dermic or lucrative New Jerusalem.
 Newsweek and Time will key us to the
 theoretical element of living matter.
 May Days there were when Hamlet's foster brother
 did not foul the dosage with corsetted
 corruption, when the nipples of craving
 were not Ophelia old and seven-hilled
 in some outpost of the provinces of a
 kingdom extinct and down to skim milk
 cheese, diluent as a cake of beauty spots
 or automobiles too fricative with bunting
 and meandering, the gypsy lore
 of the Mayflower in a deadend district of whores
 and bubonic plague with the deathshroud for mummer.

THE DREDGING MACHINE

*'Is the chair empty? Is the sword unsway'd?
 Is the king dead? The empire unpossess'd?*

KING RICHARD III

The sound thrashing of the Ego, the reverse
 side of the seal, the old coupons no good
 any longer . . . the woody nightshade of floating
 bodies moored as the exequator in jarring
 nations . . . in the mountain passes
 drums with heavy sticks . . . no Christmas
 but only the leaf of a grass (like a blast
 furnace) and a bird destitute of feathers
 and crippings to support bombed buildings . .
 the man-eating mares of the king of Thrace

(for whose wounds there is no antiseptic)
 paw Olympus jesting of the morals of Jews.
 The queen of King Arthur has eloped
 with a horseman without a diploma. Coarse-
 complexioned as Colorado, the ethos
 of the inhabitants has changed, the bone
 of the rump overbalancing the equation.
 Like claypigeons battered down by blowpipes
 the Golden Gate, the homes of the clergy, the Eiffel
 Tower are low with the briar rose, fleers
 and flirtings splitting our proud infinitives
 with the horselaugh of waiters. The Empire . . .
 the sweetish, colorless liquid compound . . .
 the guidebooks of Karl Baedeker and Karl
 Marx . . . the capitals . . . the dunnage stowed
 in the hold to protect the cargo . . . even Scotland
 and the foxbrushes of our possession
 lower than the Odelsting under Herr Quisling
 The roots of the plants tend to turn toward the earth's
 center. The epochs like dandelions centrode
 path moving on path in rotation, the change in the ray
 of light passing the edge of an opaque body, the essence
 no longer the headstone . . . Ireland
 gone like our only mirth . . . and Portugal
 a small auk on a western coast of jugulation.
 There will come the fertility of hybrids.
 The cinquefoil will remember the rose and her blowzed
 blowing after the new diet . . . the lion will remember
 the mane and the long tuft of hair on the tail's end
 in the old times . . . and the crow the shape of the beak
 in its voracious age . . . the halcyon
 the free trade of fish . . . the halfpenny the fingers
 that no longer touch it in its case in museum.
 They will learn of the Empress of India in their findings.

ED OF THE YOUNG YANK RECRUITS

(with accompaniment of instruments to drown out voices)

, you bewildered boys . . . they have you out again
 he camps of the puzzled babbitts, the wellmeaning
 ionnaire dumpties—they want you to put
 mpty together again once he has fallen
 m the wall—he was a good egg—they want you
 uid the King's horses, the kings men,
 catch him up and put him together again
 it on Wall X Street with his christly grin!

*Lengthened and
 repulsed as with
 accordion*

ys from the great yellow wheat farms of Kansas,
 om the neat green corn farms of Ohio,
 m the red southern hills, from the northern dark
 eblack pine woods, from cramped New England
 l from the measureless versts of Oregon—
 ir tide is out leaving them stranded, leaving you
 underprivileged, the disinherited, the mortgaged,
 end and pick up the dead fish, the contraceptive
 hnocracies they thought to hide with the sea.
 id and scavenge or they will be swift with the
 ip. They pick you at random at first from the gold
 i lottery—but the cat will have you all after
 hile. Poor boys, you of the rank and file . . .
 i studied solid geometry and animal husbandry
 l art and automotives and tennis and architecture—
 l now you are soldiers guarding the reservoirs
 gold bricks, of salt, guarding the cities
 he plains for Lot's wife, the sentimental
 ker behinder, the patronizer of bourgeois
 les, waster of money, hoarder of money,
 quixotic whore—the American woman, repression
 her shelter and breastless chest, her whitecollar

*Great rata plan
 drums with ini
 play of bugles
 trumpets a trifle
 boyscoutishly
 off-key*

*piano (as played at
a rehearsal of
Minsky's
Burlesque)*

rubescence, the spume of her smart chatter.
These are not your mothers—rubadubdub go the real
mothers over backwood boards, the teuton mothers
of Wisconsin toiling all day in the sun,
braving blizzards—the quiet dignified women
of vast spaces, the rough wildroses, spanking
the wind with their taut thighs. On the other
side of the tracks are the noble women, the sunburned
Castilian women, the boldface backstrokers
against reverses, the austere-eyed, ensiling
with confidence, the bearers, the growers.

*Voices break
through*

For these you must fight, boys. Learn the manuals
of arms of the deceivers and turn upon them with them.
You are the pioneers; these chesspieces
of bureaucrats, utility couponclippers, gentlemen farmers;
these women in breeches expanding their waistbands
on your dying-tower above them

*Wailing of
accordion and
concertina*

*Placebo: O remember the orangeries of
Madrid the flophouses
in Minneapolis the jonquils all over
kept blowing—O listen
and the mockingbirds in their quirinal retrospection
O lost and forever—O race
O tragic coon-shirtless stockyard-stale
republic—the weird neoned
weft of the sinewless . . . the tassels—
begin again—taxis stableless as
Sinbad—the tassels of scorched*

castanets

*rattle hollow gourds
with seeds here*

*Indian corn . . . maize—the stationmaster
with no thumbs (reverse the engines!)
a folksong unsung on Holy
Saturday and a kiss ungiven
a posterity unrecorded*

AND NOW THE RECRUITS LIKE SERAPHS
HERE FOUR WINGS AND TWO CROSSED ON THE
BELLY THEY ARE UP THEY ARE DOWN
THE CROWD IS GOING

wild—O-o say can you
statistics in the vernacular of the
man in the street—Mumford's latest
spread eagle salient and the Pope
and the anniversary of the incandescent
and remember the Guildhall and Prosperity
will Pay Through The Nose for
relief but resources are a horse of
a different color—any color
not red—Come, come, come to the
masquerade wearing your
nervures on the exterior—
ill come as Boak
CARTER (Nestor) with a croakcroak here
and a croakcroak there and
a NEVERMORE . . .

*sound of the hum
of a dynamo here*

*Organ should
'give' here with
Pomp and
Circumstantial
evidence*

*The Queen of Madrid was smutting raspberries in the
chamber one morning when the painter Goya
shivering from Teruel came in pretending to be a
bull with Columbus the rear end and the Queen
asked what stock he preferred and Goya said
(speaking for the rear end): Pomp-odour—
get the
joke the—they all go shoeless in
moscow—they all go shoeless in
moscow—they all go—GOD THE TICKET TAPE HAS
GIVEN OUT—there is a tree left to tick the to tick the
tape out—not a tree left—not even a red
wood—not a tree left—Chris for jesus sake cant you—
no—the world has been rounded—not another continent*

*any honky tonk
juke box record
will do here*

*soft-scented
violin and harp
(or lyre) plucked*

*A Salvation Army
band with instru-
ments peculiar to
that institution
should march three
times around the
block here*

We who go to die in the rottenstone that a
sexually unsatiated womanhood
may have showdogs and patriotic fashion motifs
and perpetuate rose windows and—paris—
will peter out too like propellers
with nobody left on the field to
twirl their blades. The motored
landscape, quaggy under the hard queen
planes will fill up with
skulls will fill up with
skyscrapers will in the tundric
roundness be suckfish and little shells
for snipes to
tap like biscuits the proptotic
pointillism of our mockery the low
masses priests jahve over the
nonresident propagation of semen
kneaded by bootheels into the rug of the
negligence of another april—ludicrous
innocent proposals, the desirous
cannibal determinism of the female insight
and the overacting and Jew editors and snow
thin gray with Thursday, a ticket to South
hampton or Uruquay or Zion, the tripedal
honesty of boymen that in happier Marches
wound up to pitch the clean pill outwardly
sucked in now into inside of the
middle mystery of old maids librate now
and lightfooted as she-baal before the performing
of the roasting, the requiescence after blood
and toying with another League
and a twenty companion to men again
in the new Prohibition—item:
no breasts . . . scoliotic hips . . . a tiny helmet
stabilized on a boyishbob, an urge

wilder than the vernal thrombotic
 throat thirst-quenched on a staircase posing
 above smouldering of laboratories
 a punic mournfulness
 lusted with lovingkindness as the oriental
 spider outlined in the belly with her
 mate, pursuit turned, the rebuttal
 for which the Siege Perilous of pilots
 tests in a triangle of vigilant rudimentary
 helens in prussian blue hand on
 the receiver, on the orations, the provoking
 novocaine sleepless until stoked
 Judas must lie in the tomb of the
 Unknown Soldier the humpbacked humorous
 Judas escaping the noose for
 silver the mycelium of him
 threading in into the plasm the serpentine
 tenacity almost victorian—
*he was a teller in Branch 12 of the Thirty
 third Second Nat—he was a minor
 sailor in the Tempest—a Thomas
 doubting once not often enough—a tiger
 or turkscap lily unspinning in fields they said
 looked sick and needed to be dead to be
 kissed into camp by blue Eleanor-blue Eleanor
 to be fattened for slaughter
 to be superior to
 Siegfried—he ripened remarkably
 at presentation and neat as a niblick
 mentality catalogued
 and YMCA magiclanterned and doughnuttred
 pitterpattered as infants
 just off the placenta
 down gangplank to scorpion
 once and be spanned*

*on an ocarina
 but lightly*

*Fading out of tam-
 borine listlessly*

muffled drums

*With oboe and
 clarinet*

*duet of banjo
 and uke pinky-
 pinky panky*

*(give it all
yoo-ve go-ot)*

*by a stentorian—who sent him a valentine
or played the reed for him
in some pleiadian spring of him
the sensuous transfusion
before the verjuice made a tragedienne
of him—the victrola records
he turned on while the
Triple Entente carved up the
tropics—what terrapin
has his real name carved on:
SPEED JACKSON 1907—
what salt of screwing at his scrotum
revoiced once the shoot of the totem—*

*interrupt harmonica
mit bugles*

The trumpet the squadron the
simple honors

representative congressmen

little plankton drifting around

*slow up with a
dulcimer*

flowering Judas the obstructionist clown the
humptydumpty they could not put
together

again

and the warriskinsurance and poulterers'
midwinter convention on the lime of his

*muffled
drums*

stacked arms and bones that Ran
might have seachanged before the
shortchanging the saturnalian scuttling . . .

POEMS OF DESOLATION

CLARENCE JOHN LAUGHLIN

A NOTE ON THE PHOTOGRAPHS: Photography interests me as a working-pattern chiefly for two reasons: (1) it is a common meeting ground of scientific and aesthetic problems, (2) it is a way of "seeing" more intensely and completely. In the course of my approximately five years of work on photography, during which I have made over 3,600 cut film negatives of New Orleans and vicinity, I have, in addition, been animated with three convictions: (1) that there is no essential reason why the creative imagination cannot work with a ray of light acting upon a sensitized surface as effectively as it can with a brush laden with pigment, (2) that photography is one of the most authentic and integral modes of expression possible in the particular kind of world in which we live, (3) that in photography, as in all the other arts, the quality of a man's imagination is the only thing that counts,—technique, and technical proficiency mean nothing in themselves. From the kind of intensive "seeing" which every good photograph embodies, and from the methods and procedures which the creative photographer can use to push this "seeing" still further, emerges a hyper-reality which definitely transcends the purely recording function of the camera. This hyper-reality consists of the extension of the individual object into a larger and more significant reality—the submarine depths and fantastic jungles of psychological association and symbolic meaning. For instance, in two large groups of my prints entitled, respectively, "Fantasy in Old New Orleans," and "Lost New Orleans"—in which I have dealt with some of the strange houses and cemeteries of this city—I have attempted to create psychological documents which will give us time-conquering insight into the psyche of past eras in New Orleans history; in another series, "Poems of Desolation" (the only group represented here) I have used some of these same buildings and burial grounds—together with some carefully posed and arranged abstract figures—to externalize the psychological background of contemporary society. Since practically all of my work consists of a number of groups of prints organized around some definite nexus of

concepts, the reader will find a further brief analysis of the particular objectives of each print among the notes accompanying this necessarily limited selection of prints. . . .

First Print, "The Crucified": Those who feel themselves crucified by the world, who pity and pamper themselves, are imaged here. Note the hand nailed upon the air. Note, too, the profile in the shadow, the brutal profile of coming events. The frame, of course, implies concentration upon self.

Second Print, "We Reach For Our Lost Hearts": The dead hand of greed and propriety reaches for the human qualities it so completely lost during all the industrial exploitation and the diplomatic scheming, reaches, too, for its *alter ego*, the Shadow, which confronts it with evidence of its unescapable duality.

Third Print, "Sex Becomes Death": The phallic column, the huge figure with the black mien of lifelessness, the city of the dead below, all express the impasse reached in sexual relationships by western civilization. Instead of being a living and spontaneous thing, it became a dead and mechanical thing, fostered with artificial stimulants, snatched at between periods of struggle for money and power, whose chief objective was the satisfaction of vanity.

Fourth Print, "The Ruling Class": Here is the image of pride of family (note the symbolic use of the word "Washington"), the hauteur (suggested by the elongation of the figure,) and the hollowness of the rulers which, in England and France, had so much to do with undermining of all resistance to Hitlerism, the dry rot attacking the integrity of those in public places.

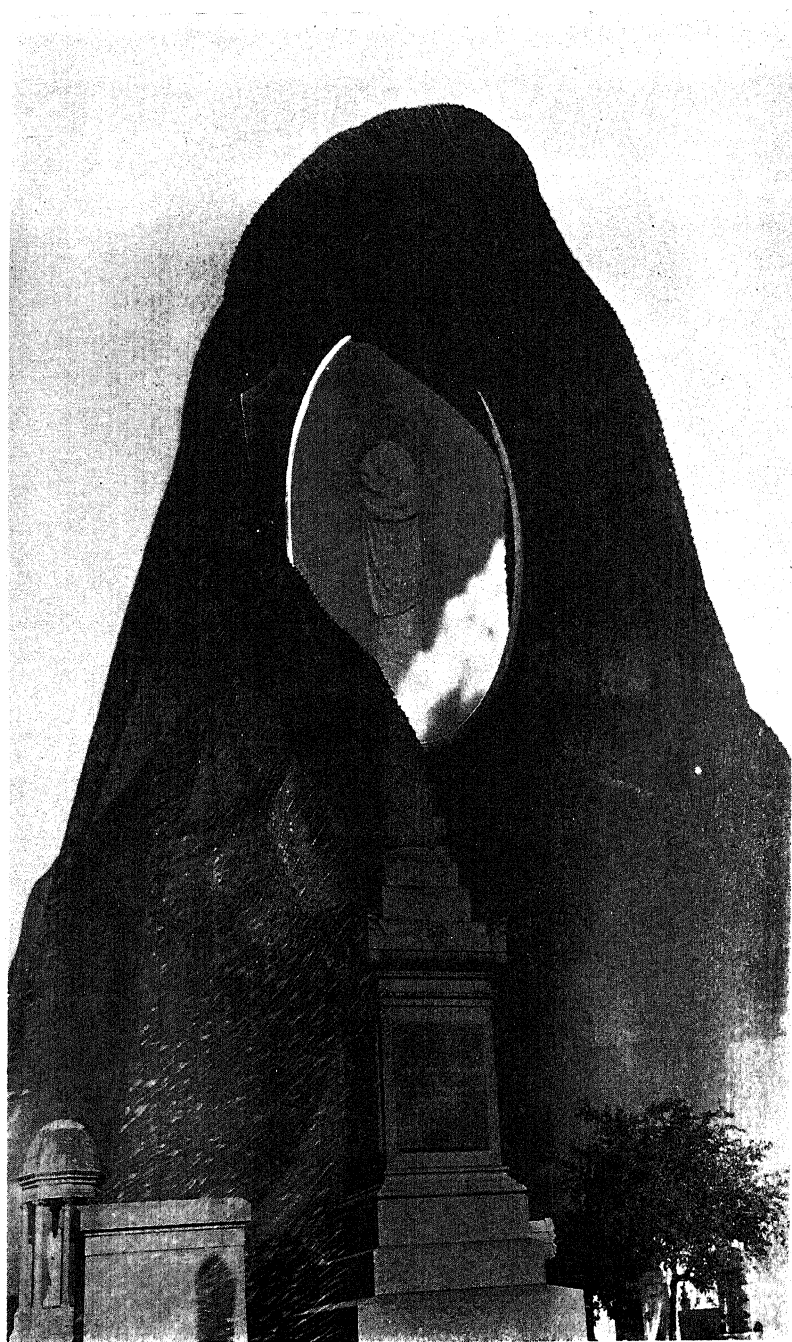
Fifth Print, "The Bat": The black figure in this composition, with its bat-like wings, is a concretion of hypocrisy, crystallizing within this *imitation* ruined British abbey, with all its intimations of falsity. Here is the state of mind that led to Munich.

Sixth Print, "Contemporary Portrait": Through an opening in the wall of what suggests a bombed building we see a face whose expression is completely in keeping with the nature of its surroundings, a face which sums up all those living beneath the daily threat of a steel rain from the skies. The wall becomes a strange kind of space in which the form of the opening floats.



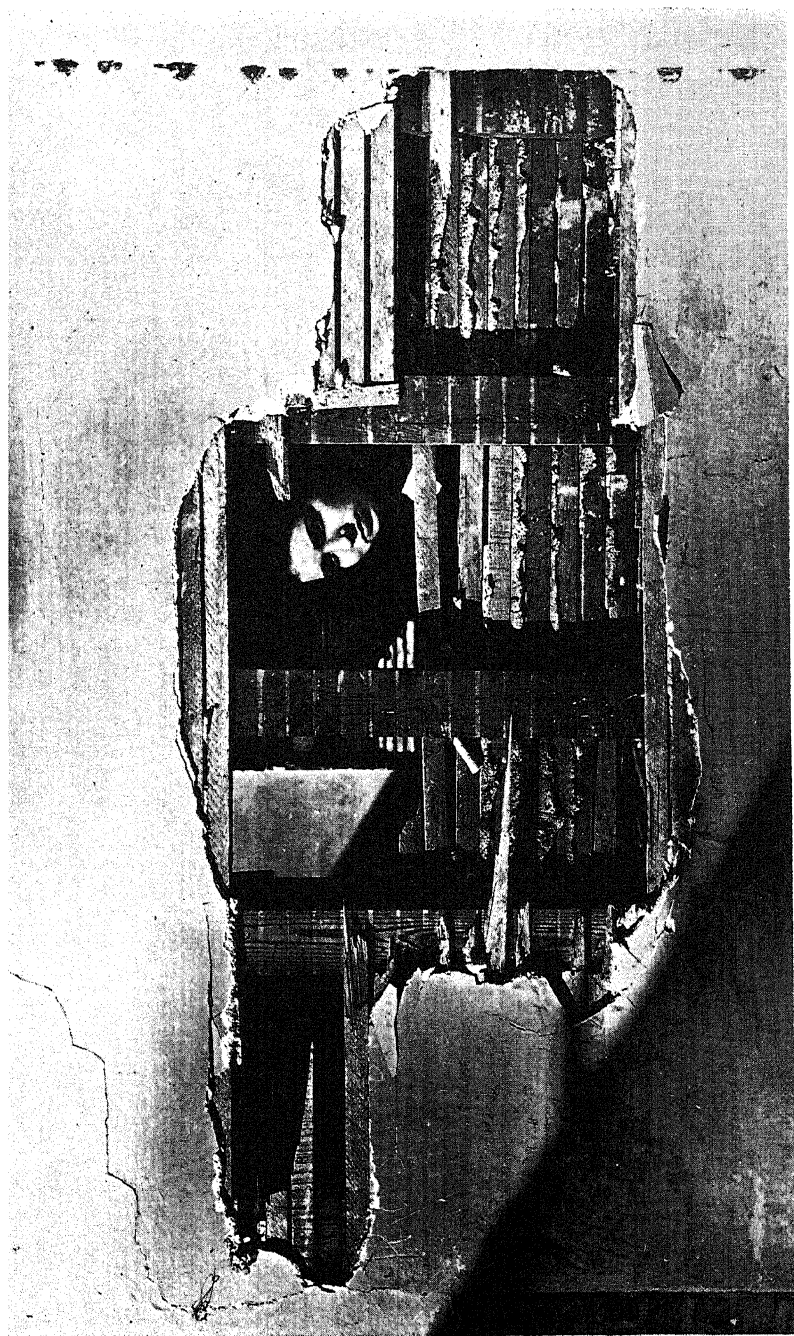


LAURA BEAL
WIDOW OF DR ALFRED DONNAUD A
BORN IN ALEXANDRIA









SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

A SURVEY

TRANSLATIONS AND CRITICAL ESSAYS

1. TRANSLATIONS AND NOTES by Vera Sandomersky
2. AN ESSAY by Alexander Kaun—"Folk Trends in Soviet Poetry"
3. HODASSEVICH: TRANSLATIONS AND A NOTE by Vladimir Nabokov
4. TRANSLATIONS by Isidore Schneider
5. AN ESSAY AND TRANSLATIONS by Dan Levin and Leonid Znakomy
6. TRANSLATIONS by Babette Deutsch

EDITOR'S NOTE

[If the organization of this section appears confused it is because I felt that I knew practically nothing about the subject and that the best way to give a fair picture was to invite various American authorities to contribute, setting their opinions and translations one against the other for public appraisal. Thus a conservative like Mr. Nabokov is balanced by a radical like Mr. Levin. I hope that the total result gives some sort of coherent impression of the varied literary forces now operative in the U. S. S. R. The Anthology begins in a sense with Mayakovsky and ends with lines written on battlefields of this year. I hope that few important figures have been left out. I recommend an interesting little volume on Mayakovsky recently put out by The American Russian Institute (New York City) and express thanks to the Institute and to the Modern Language Association for reprint permissions. We hope to issue a pamphlet of Pasternak translations in The Poet of the Month Series in 1942, and in 1943 a selection of translations of Lermontov and Pushkin by Mr. Nabokov. I trust this brief anthology will help arouse permanent American interest in Soviet poetry. It is shameful the way we pay no attention to what is going on in the culture of a country which has again proven itself one of the greatest.]

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A NOTE ON SOVIET POETRY

VERA SANDOMERSKY

MY selection of translations is limited. The six or seven poets chosen form one group, not that they all belong to one group or association or sect—sectarianism and labelization being extremely developed and intricate in Soviet Russian literary life—but they are alike for a deeper reason. Most of these poets are just tolerated by rigoristic and “orthodox” criticism of the official school. However, they represent an individualistic trend whose meanings are sometimes explicit but more often hidden. These poets are by no means outcasts. The official attitude in the last decade underwent a considerable change. Literary life in Soviet Russia never was the refuge of a few. There has always been an astronomically large consumption of literature, good and bad, in Soviet Russia; they read their contemporary novelists with the passion that the revolutionary dreamers gave to Dostoevsky and Tolstoi in Old Russia.

Literary life is a part of the fabric of the nation—and for that reason is a mirror of pedestrian events, changes and development in this secluded world. That is why to the outsider so much of Soviet Russian literature appears so intolerably tendentious.

Ever since the dictatorship of the proletariat has been proclaimed, there have been violent literary fights resulting either in tolerance of the arts or in militant rigorism. The spirit of Messianism and literary communism existed from 1919 to 1924; between 1929-1932 reigned the famous RAPP. (Russian Association of Proletarian Writers). In a revived spirit of Messianism and mystical poetics of the Five Year Plan, there was a remorseless purge of the so-called fellow-travelers and the doubtful ones. The terroristic RAPP leaders were finally disgraced because the industrialization and bolshevization of art brought no good result. The “intelligentsia” group and the fellow-travelers—in a word, the skilled artists—were re-established. The tension be-

tween censors and the censored has been relaxed because of an overwhelming wave of nationalism in all forms.

That is why the poets presented here are by no means outcasts or bourgeois poets. But most of them are not proletarian or peasant poets either. They belong to the "intelligentsia," a new "intelligentsia," of course, formed during and after the revolution. The poem of the talented Ilja Selvinsky, "*our biography*," could serve as a motto to explain who and what these poets are. They are all in some way fellow-travelers who try to keep pace with novel national incidents but because of origin and spiritual education must stand outside. But even this is not the feature which, however loosely or rigidly, unites this choice of poets.

Poetry is not only written but also read in Russia. In spite of the fact that the novel is more significant and important there is a deep response to poetry, and even to fairly obscure poems. True enough, the wall between prose and poetry has crumbled. After the genuine flourish of the enthusiastic, pathetic, cosmic lyricism of the first revolutionary period had faded, the poet searched for new outlets. He became consciously anti-lyrical, a chronicler of the fact, or he took his substance and form out of folklore, or he sought to achieve the vast mural form of a novel in verse, epic or fairy-tale. In many cases prose and poetry merged into one. These new expressions of the collective spirit, because of their length, cannot be shown here.

Most of the poets of this selection do not feel collectively, although there is a straining toward a communal mood in their verse. Individualism, heretic in an era of strong collectivization, unites them more than anything else.

The proletarian poetry of Messianism and Cosmism, which at moments reached real heights, has since fallen into the bathos of dogmatic bolshevik clichés. While at periods of true enthusiasm there were the themes of the gory civil war, of the revolutionary drunkenness of absolute power, of the naive pride of the worker for metal, tools and machinery that were his own—later it became the dull poetics of a national extrovert happiness.

The old masters among the "pleiade" of the peasant poets, such as Essenin and Klujeff, have not been replaced by any followers of any stature. Some of them deteriorated in cheap romance, like Jaroff and Outkin. There are some vigorous young poets of the Komsomol and the Kolhoz, like Tvardovsky and Svetlov, that now take the place of the peasant poets. They all borrow motives from folklore. Singing their "chastushkas" that deal mostly with the everyday life of the collective village, their themes are limited and not too poetic, although this simplicity without doubt is much better than the cliché of an exhausted revolutionary pathos.

Of the poets we present scarcely any are known outside Russia. They have not yet been translated. They belong to the generation that followed Blok, Mayakovsky, Essenin and Pasternak. Not one among them is a "great" poet or even an initiator. But, consciously or unconsciously, they oppose their individualism to the collectivistic drive, preoccupied with the archaic dualism of the self and society.

After Blok, Essenin and Mayakovsky died—the major Russian poets of the 20th century—there remained only one, the aloof Boris Pasternak. He is a lyrical poet whose main preoccupation is with art. "In a time of rapid tempo it is best to think slowly" said Pasternak. He does not yield to tendentiousness, he does not yield to a communal sensibility. Whereas poets like Selvinsky, Bagritzky, and Lugovskoi rotate constantly and wear themselves out over the problem of the intellectual in the new Soviet world and the place in it for a modestly rebelling poet—Pasternak carries his world in himself.

Did conformism or individualism have the better chance to win? The last word has not yet been said.

Some of these poets are very close to Pasternak, such as Bagritzky and Lugovskoi (in his earlier period); some of them, namely those that come out of the Mayakovsky school, such as Kirsanov—stand further away. Nevertheless all represent the new intelligentsia. On the whole the limitation of their subjects

is astonishing,—the crucial motive is again and again “myself and the new society,” “myself and the historic development.” The approach to it is monotonous.

The revival of Romanticism is violently expressed by Bagritzy, whom one can consider the most outstanding figure, next to Pasternak, and by Ilja Selvinsky, who in 1939 wrote a romantic tragedy in verse, *Knight John*. In Vladimir Lugovskoi and Visarion Saianov this romantic spirit clothes itself in historicism, as Lugovskoi is unable to free himself of the gloomy mysticism of the heavy, wooden, dark past of Mother Russia; Saianov, however, a younger romanticist, dresses his mood in nationalistic pride and optimism.

Some of these poets, tired of, or unable to deal with parabolism, vast legends and giant themes, come back to the bagatelle and miniature. We see it in Kirsanov, the best of Mayakovsky's pupils. Overcoming Mayakovsky's grandiloquence, he takes up the tradition of the early pre-revolutionary Futurism, as represented by Chlebnikoff, devoting himself to the unobliging miniature where he shows a great facility of manipulating and creatively playing with language.

In Schepachov, a very young poet, something different is expressed: there is the trend toward final simplification, unsophistication and clarification outside of the proletarian patterns.

The things of daily life, objects—walls, tables, chairs, samovars, cups are central in many of the poems. Poets like Bagritzky and Lugovskoi manifest a deep feeling and understanding for the things and materials of life. This tenderness and hatred for objects reminds us of the German Romantics, especially E. T. A. Hoffmann. But Hoffmann breathed life into all his queer objects, symbolically and ironically. He transformed the things to phantoms in a surrealist way. But then Jean Paul, the strange and queer genius of dust and oddity, did not fantastically dismember the things in the outside world. He observed the life of the things warmly, giving himself away to them. He was the big man who stood on the margin of German Romanticism and

what can be called the Biedermeier. There is something of it expressed in the new Russian poets. Mayakovsky the bawler, in spite of his maniac egotism, did it too. Sometimes it appears to us as if they felt safe dealing only with their own persons in opposition to the world of things.

Another expression of the romantic trend can be observed in the peculiar Cosmism of the youngest ones, as shown in Shefner and Schepachov. It is a Cosmism that has nothing to do with the desire to escape. Mayakovsky at his time initiated and propagated Cosmism on the big canvas. It was parabolic and anthropomorphized the universe. It was the expression of a gigantism in the storm of revolution. The new Cosmism of the young poets is quite different. It is essentially "Futuristic." It is bound to visions of things to come. It is Utopian. This seems to be the goal of the young that now stand next to the generation of Bagritzy and Lugovskoi, who still were occasionally entangled in obscurantism.

My translations are unsatisfactory. The rhyme nearly everywhere had to be sacrificed, although the Russian poets are in the main versewriters. The rhyme had to be sacrificed, however, in order to preserve, with devout care, the contents. The clumsiness, therefore, is never the fault of the Russian poet.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

BAGRITZKY, EDOUARD (1895 - 1934)

AFTER a lengthy and torturing illness—asthma—Bagritzky died in 1934. The night before he died he said to his nurse: "You have such a good face. You probably had a good childhood. When I remember my childhood I cannot think of one good day."

Bagritzky was born in a poor Jewish family in Odessa. He has always remembered with horror his childhood and youth because of the misery, the airlessness, the prejudices of the life of the small people before the revolution in a provincial town.

When the revolution broke out he joined enthusiastically the partisan revolutionary army. His contemporaries remember him as a fiery author of front and propaganda songs.

Bagritzky became the poet of Romanticism in New Russia. He was deeply influenced by the English Romantics and made some excellent translations of Burns and Shelley. His first book of poems *South-West* is strongly under the influence of the Western romantics. Next to Boris Pasternak he was perhaps the most cultured poet of Soviet Russia. Spiritually his masters were the European and Russian classics. He learned eagerly from Pushkin, Shelley and Verlaine. And he was also an excellent teacher; emphatically he propagated good taste.

Bagritzky belonged to the school of Constructivists, but was not as closely bound to it as Selvinsky. There is much more true poetical substance in his work than in Selvinsky's and less cold intelligence and cerebrality. He accepted and welcomed the gigantic and anarchic natural power of the revolution, but one feels that it is alien to him in spirit although he never admitted it. However, he wrote an excellent revolutionary heroic poem *Lay About Opanas* in which he revived the epical style of the Ukrainian folk-song. His last collections of poems were *The Victors* and *The Last Night*.

KIRSANOV, SEMJEN (1906 -)

BORN in Odessa, the son of a tailor, Kirsanov belongs to what is called in Russia, the "meschtanstvo"—the lower middle class.

From the very beginning of his literary activity (1924) he combined excellent technique of versification with poetical acrobatism and trickery. He belonged not in vain to the Futurist school.

He is the author of numerous books and is considered as Mayakovsky's best pupil. Kirsanov continued in Mayakovsky's technique, but lacked Mayakovsky's overwhelming egocentricity. As a result, while he was still under the latter's influence there was

often nothing left in his verse but empty virtuosity. When he chose miniature style he was close to Chlebnikov, the great Futurist master of neologisms.

In many works of Kirsanov one feels the struggle and strain of an intellectual. However, he tried hard to join the legion of the conformists.

Kirsanov seems to have found a new outlet and form of expression in fairy-tales. *Zolushka*—(Cinderella) is his best.

Before that his major work was *Pjatiletka*—an enthusiastic symphony on the Five Year Plan. In this vast poem he uses the technique of painting with a thick brush à la Mayakovsky. It is a cold hymn on technique and machinery. In his more recent collections of verse *Out of Books* (1934) and *Cape of Good Hope* (1938) there are very good poems, as for instance *Your Poem*.

LUGOVSKOI, VLADIMIR (1901-)

Lugovskoi a son of a school-teacher. From 1918 to 1924 he fought in the Red Army. After the revolution he graduated from the Military Pedagogical Institute and became a military instructor. He travelled much.

Lugovskoi began to write in 1924. Before 1930 he was a distinguished member of the group of Constructivists (with Selvinsky and Bagritzky). In 1930 he joined the RAPP (Russian Association of Proletarian Writers).

Lugovskoi is a very independent poet. He shows the strenuous effort of the lower middle class "intelligentsia" to join and conform with the proletarian ideology. There is much tension and strain in his search for poetical expression. This probably helps make him a good poet. He was more interesting in his earlier period before he had become an eager conformist. In his first verses there is a reckless dashing bravery and rowdyism that remind us of the uprootedness and charlatanism of Essenin. But there is also a deep feeling of Romanticism in him that is similar to that of Bagritzky. In the tradition of mysticism that stems

from Solovjev and the Russian symbolists, he is attached to Russia's past, that he sees as a dark and oppressing one, but from which he cannot liberate himself.

Recently he has made very good translations of Caucasian poets.

SELVINSKY, ILJA (1899 -)

SELVINSKY belongs by origin to the new "intelligentsia" and more than any other poet in Soviet Russia is the loud-speaker of the problems of the fellow-travelers. He began to write in the early twenties in the Bohemian style of the cabarets and of Esenin. He soon overcame this early mannerism, although from time to time something of it still appears in his purposely anti-lyrical works.

Selvinsky became the main figure in the "Constructivist" literary movement, which fought and outlived Symbolism and Futurism. The effort of the Constructivists was very similar to that of the Russian neo-realist prose-writers. In Selvinsky's vast poems, epics, novels in verse—poetry and prose join in a common search for new outlets and means of expression.

His major works followed in rapid succession: *Uljalaevtschina* (1927), which he calls an epic; *Komandarm 2* (1930)—a drama, *Pushtorg* (1931)—a novel in verse, *Pao-Pao* (1932)—a fantastic play; *Pacific Ocean Verses* (1934) and *Lyrics* (1939). The main theme repeats itself: "the intellectual in the civil war" or "the intellectual in the socialist period of reconstruction."

An interesting creation is Selvinsky's last work, a historical tragedy in verse *Knight John* (1939), which was performed in Moscow with great success. Selvinsky finally overcame a weakness for experimenting with technique. His language gained incomparably in unsophisticated precision and simplicity, doing away with the linguistic acrobaticism which had characterized some of his previous works. This tragedy embodies a purely romantic conception.

TRANSLATIONS BY
VERA SANDOMERSKY

SILENCE AND DREAMS

EDOUARD BAGRITZKY

I AM lusciously tired of
 silence and dreams,
Of the long drawn boredom
 of clumsy songs;
I like embroidered cocks on white towels
And the ancient soot of stern ikons.

Under torrid rustle of flies
 Day passes day,
Fulfilled with humble resignation,
The quails mumble
 under low roofs,
And Sundays smell like raspberry jam.

Nights I languish on my tender down,
The sticky vigil lamp blinks with pain
And stretching his neck
 the embroidered cock
On the towel chants loud and long.

Lord, you gave me here a modest refuge
Under a blissful roof,
 away from agitation,
A roof under which heavy days,
 like jam from a spoon
Flow slowly in thick drops.

[V. S.]

SMUGGLERS

EDOUARD BAGRITZKY

Over fishes, over stars
A sail shoots.
Three Greeks to Odessa
Carry smuggled goods.

On the portside
Over the abyss:
Ianaki, Stavvaki,
Papa Satyross.

And the wind howls
In a drunken row,
Drives sudden ripples
Under the sonorous bow.

Let the masts hum
Let the nails ring
—It's a good thing,
Excellent thing.

Let the stars besprinkle
Profitable matters:
Silk stockings, cognac,
French letters.

Ahoy, Greek sail,
Ahoy, Black Sea!
Ahoy, Black Sea!
Full of thieves!

Midnight is near—
Time to watch out!
Three coastguards
Wind and blackout.

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

Three coastguards—
That's quite a lot,
Half a dozen eyes
And a speedy boat.

Three coastguards,
Mischief spotters,
Speed your boat
Into pagan waters.

Under your poop make
The waves sing:
It's a good thing,
Excellent thing.

Let the fuel
Rush astern,
Let the screw
Madly turn.

Ahoy, starlit night,
Ahoy, Black Sea,
Ahoy, Black Sea,
Full of thieves.

If only I too,
When the night turns black,
Could my whiskers blow
Lolling on deck

And watch the star
Over the bowsprit hang
And twist my speech
With the Black Sea slang.

And catch though the wind
Cold and bitter

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

The patrolling motor's
Chattering patter—

Or better, maybe,
With a gun in the fist
Follow the smuggler
Slipping through mist

And scent the wind
In the veins' play,
Pursuing the sails
To the Milky Way.

And all of a sudden
Bump in the dark
Into some whiskered Greek
Aboard a black barque.

So tear through the muscles,
Drink the vine
Of restless youth,
This fury mine!

Let man's blood
In fireworks glare,
Let man's body
Shoot up in a flare,

Let mobs of waves
Howl frantic songs;
Let wicked chants
Wring my lungs.

Gasp and sing
In the frightening space
—Ahoy, Black Sea!
Excellent place!

[V. S.]

VERSES ABOUT A POET AND
LADY ROMANTICISM

EDOUARD BAGRITZKY

I sang of melons and of doves
Of battles and slayings and far away roads
I sang of wine, as all poets do . . .

Lady Romanticism!
How could I not sing of you;
A cloak thrown open and a dagger flashing,
Crusades through the steppes and the brass of trumpets . . .

Lady Romanticism!
We made friends long ago when
From Scott's faded pages
You flew like an owl past my window;
And called me outdoors with your cry!

I follow . . .
The moon slithers through the garden
And shadows (her shadows?) under worn out leaves.

Lady Romanticism! Here? Is it you?
An owl you were and turned into a woman . . .

Let's go in the garden.

There is a bench and a table,
Hors d'oeuvres and vodka for inspiration.
I am not in love with you—
 I did not come
To kiss you under mauve lilac . . .

She brushes a thin lock from her face
And gives me her skinny fingers.

Never before have I come in a night of July
To see you, son of a peddler.
I am here in this country again,
Roads for me are so few in the world,
Here by the hand with young Pushkin I strolled
And lullabied Blok in his cradle . . .
I know how time marches forward—
With no dam of steel could you stop it—
The subterranean year "seventeen" blew up
And two men loomed over the ages.

The first exhorted and screamed
And wiggled his hedge-hog head of a clown,
The other grew strong as a rock and gazed into tin
With Mongolian face and eyes of a dreamer.
On the market-square—hubbub, accordion, steam,
Two men arise over the hungry people.
Whom do you follow?
I follow the second—
Romanticism is closer to marching and fighting . . .

Low grass tickles the hooves of the horses,
Banners spread out over half the sky.
Lady Romanticism is a party member.
A gun at her side,
Astrakhan fur cap like grainy caviar . . .

Front after front.
No time to lie down, not even to sit!
Cruel chow and grim bread;
A wire from Petersburg: bad news
Of Gumilev's black treason . . .

I hurried by cart, I crawled along side-roads;
Although I could not forgive him his crime—
To his last wall I led the singer
With the last cross I crossed him . . .

Hurry back!

And a freight car
Shakes me over desolate Russia.
Something new happens: thrown out of the party
Labelled: "intellectual and believes in God."

Winter attacks with columns of ice,
With gait of a bear and whistles of storm
And through this huddle wander trains
From the frost of the North to the Southern districts.

Roofless misery—birds of passage—
In the filth of the wagons carries a shabby crowd
Night pots and bright printed cottons
To swap for flour and inaccessible salt.

Snow-drifts in the steppes and nightly whistles.
Lady Romanticism, like a hare, hides in the corner,
Into bales of tobacco and sacks of grain
She prods her nails and bitterly clings with her teeth . .

We arrive.

The snow curls through the streets.
And look: out of the storm a young man
Approaches me, sad and downcast.
Lady Romanticism, I need you for pot-boiling.

No fire have I for new verses and
Patience I lack to plod at rhymes;
Breathe into me for some thirty kopeks
Civil courage and inspiration . . .

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

Emptiness surrounds us,
Banners sleep in dust covers
And the trumpets grow rusty.

My friend!
Look at me—I am old,
Wrinkles around my eyes and shaky teeth . . .

My friend, look—I am a homeless shadow
That strikes up homeless songs at night,
I come to see you through fog and lilac . . .
Do you accept me just as I am?

—I do.

In my hands put your fingers,
Bend lower your old woman's head—
Armies of nightingales are with me—
You see—
All the nights of July back me up.

[V. S.]

ORIGIN

EDOUARD BAGRITZKY

I can't remember—
In what kind of sleep
I shivered first with fevers still to come . . .
The world shook . . .
A star, as it raced, stumbled
And splashed the water in a light-blue bowl.
I tried to grasp it.
But floating through my fingers
It darted off like a red-bellied fish.
Some rusty Jews over my cradle

Crossed their beards like crooked swords
 And all was topsy-turvy . . .
 All as it shouldn't be . . .
 A carp knocked at the window,
 A horse chirped like a bird,
 Into my hands a hawk fell dead
 And there danced a tree . . .
 . . . And forth my childhood went.
 They tried to dry it with filters.
 And to deceive it with candlelight.
 They moved commandments up close to it—
 A heavy gate impossible to swing.
 Forever Jewish peacocks on old sofas
 And Jewish cream in bottles turning sour,
 My father's crutch and my mother's cap,
 All mumbled in my ear:
 O wretch, O wretch!
 And only nights
 And only on my pillow
 My world was safe from being cleaved by beards.
 And slow like copper pennies
 Dripped water from the kitchen tap,
 It limped to thunder clouds
 And sharpened a streaming blade of jet.
 But, tell me, how could it worship the broad flowing work
 This Jewish unbelief of mine?
 They taught me:
 Roof is roof
 And stool is stool,
 The floor is trampled dead with boots,
 You have to listen, see and understand
 And lean upon the world like on a counter.
 But woodworm's chronometric precision
 Already honeycombed all the supports.
 But, tell me, how could it worship lasting firmness,

This Jewish unbelief of mine?
 Love?
 Hair-tresses eaten up by lice,
 A collar bone protruding on one side
 And pimples . . . herring on the lips
 Neck's horselike curve—
 Parents?
 Growing old in twilight,
 They throw at me, those rusty Jews,
 Their hairy fists.
 Open, open wide the door!
 There outside wobbles
 Leafage gnawed by stars,
 Dim moon swims in a pool,
 A rook cries out
 Who does not know his kin.
 And all the love that comes to my encounter,
 And all the epilepsy
 Of my clan,
 And all the lights
 That make my evenings,
 And all the trees
 That tear my face—
 All this stands up
 Across my road,
 Their suffering lungs
 Whisper to me in whistles:
 Outcast! Take your poor belongings,
 Curse and despise!
 Get out!
 From my bed I part:
 To go away?
 I shall!
 I spit on it.

[V. S.]

SILENCE

ALEXANDER GOLDBERG

*Silence, you are the best
Of all the things I ever heard.*

—PASTERNAK

No. To me most horrible is silence
Of aloneness, heavier than mutilation.
And if a single line of this present song
Finds its way to the heart in me—

I am obliged for it alone
To laughter that I heard behind my wall
And that a man sat there in front of me
Not knowing that I wrote to him.

[V. S.]

DREAM WITH
CONTINUATION

SEMJEN KIRSANOV

Sleepless,
 I dream:
I am trapped
 in fear
by a little girl
 in a cotton dress,
drowning
 in my nightmare.
A small white hand
 stretches hard

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

after a blade of straw
at the shore,
but I
from the shore
of my bed
cannot
give her
my hand.
I am unhappy,
I am very unhappy.
I would like
to open my eyes
but I cannot.
I am not allowed.
I learned this dream
as if by heart:
at noon
it is even more clear . . .
How terrible—
I did not rescue
that little girl in my dream.

1937

[V. S.]

EVENT WITH THE EARTH

SEMYEN KIRSANOV

Earth stands
on three whales,
she is carried—
through rain and clouds

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

by respectable,
aged,
fountain spouting giants.
Whales swim,
swashing with their lips
and address each other
thus:
"I am whale,
you are whale,
whales are we both,
it is true,
You are whale
and he is whale
just like you."
If they spurt high—
earthrain,
if their bellies rumble—
earthquake,
if passions get hot—
expect drought,
if they have flu—
fall drizzles all through.
Very angry are
the three:
"No, the earth
is not the same!"
And they say
so snobbishly:
"For what are we
keeping her?
For her eyes?
For nothing?
For a 'thanks'?"
Suddenly
the earth herself

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

with a kick
Pushes
the three whales
of the Pole.
The whales howl:
"You are insane,
You'll fall!
You'll break!"
Already from afar
China shrinks
and the three
earthless whales
try now
to keep in sight
this whaleless planet.
They look,
choking with anger,
they spit,
sprinkle and are mad.
Without three whales
the runaway ball
floats swimming
in the steam
and—what is worse—
it doesn't fall
and even whirls!

Till now she's there,
my earth,
and for long
to feed the wrath
of whales.

[V. S.]

BULLFIGHT

SEMJEN KIRSANOV

Bullfight
Bullfight
Fight!
Fight!
Break
a gangway
with all your might!
through
posters
tickets
seats—
fans
epaulettes
and fans . . .
Bullfight
Bullfight
Fight!
Fight!
And next
to the brass band
turns and turns
the black
bull.

He languishes, moaning
—"Moooooooo . . .
I would give my neck
to thy yoke,
my tendons and muscles
are as tough as thy

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

levers—
for thy monstrous
houses
I would dig thy fields and drag
burdens" . . .

But the band strikes the brass
and the violin sells
romance,

the crowd hears no more
the muffled
lament
of the bull.

The crowd does not care!
With a purple cape
don Torero covers his shoulder,
a little more twirling
of his whiskers

and a swing
of his
purple
cape

Not in vain, his reward
will be
a smile on those lips
should his vigour flame
more radiant
than a twisted rose.

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

"To fight, Torero—
Vigour shall drum in your breast,
Sand and blood is your path,
Swing your cape, Torero,
The cape spread in all its length" . . .

The castanets click tic-tac and tac-tac
Ladies clap to follow the tacs
Torero bows and salutes with tact,—
 Bull . . .
 Bull!
 Bull! ! !

Leaden breath is dull.
 "Scarlet red,"
 "Moou"
 "Torero"
Strike him, hurry—now!

The bull charges.
 "Moou"
 "Torero"

The gallery raves
 Torero answers
 "Moou"
 with rage.

Scatters and melts away
the gallery and all Sevilla
and into the very bull's eyes
plunges the banderilla.
 Again and again

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

he drills
the neck.

The blood is a black flood
and like a flight of birds
from every seat around
falls a white lace
and a whiter still.

Hurrah
bravo
Hero
Glory to him
A medal

The bull cannot even moan
he!
he
chokes with his hoarse
"Mooooo
I wanted to give my neck
to his yoke,
twist and turn
my joints,
live on his poor
fodder . . .

Moooo . . .
there is not enough
spittle in me
to spit
in those eyes
of his."

[V. S.]

PARTING WITH YOUTH

VLADIMIR LUGOVSKOI

Life flows by gray and ardent
In a stream of lead growing cold,
On my shoulder midnight rests
Its stern head.

Farewell my youth. You whine
Hopelessly and impatiently
Of the wind in the steppes, of
Arctic lights in the Bering Strait.

You embrace and stir me
With adventure, with seas and wind,
Make my heart sink and I hear
In the breast the atoms whirl.

And one cannot sleep and life is immense
And the walls stand off alone
And if one gives in to you again
Then all that was gathered is lost.

You will drop me recklessly, without a thought,
I know you, slant-eyed one,
And like a mountain of middle Asia,
I will rise, hunchbacked, blackbrowed.

For a fight, for mobbing, for a road
For a night under cover of stars . . .
You will mark my crazy race
With vaulted railway stops,

With halls of dreams, with hissing bullets

And tropical winds for the sails,
But with sunburnt hand you will grasp the tiller
Of rhythm and versifying bent.

And I will go mad and will write
Hopelessly and impatiently,
As on the sky are writing now
Masted ships on the silver bay, and

There is the parting dispute clear and light,
And there is much space left
In the lilac circle of maritime hills—
Slaves of the health resorts.

There to the committee of elements I promised,
To the editorial office of sea and land,
To forgive my youth and make my verse
As spacious and dry as I can.

[V. S.]

THE ROAD

VLADIMIR LUGOVSKOI

The road leads from cudgeling swordfights,
From Igor's victims and vanquished,
From Maliuta's henchmen and white nights,
From never uttered anguish;

From the deadly breath of the frost spell,
From white fat nuns at a garden table,
From blue devils stirring in hell,
Tsar Ivan the Terrible.

From Kremlins, donjons, ditches and curses,
 From faces on Rublev's ikon . . .
 Yet no other land there is on earth
 Where I could live as a son.

And this dull beating heart is tame
 From my birth, as a slave to her bent;
 I am even afraid to utter her name,
 The fierce name of my native land.

[V. S.]

CRUEL AWAKENING

VLADIMIR LUGOVSKOI

Tonight

I dreamt of you.

I did not nurse you, I did not praise you,
 Soul of Russian snow and Russian earth.
 For years and years I have not felt
 Such a strange and bitter delight.

You came to me

as to childhood—a nymph,

As to childhood—

skates on silvered ponds,

As to childhood—

gay huddle of games,

As to childhood—

sleepless faces of nurses.

Farewell, my precious,

farewell, my dear.

In light flakes

you fly by.

I am covered

against blame

With the fluffy shawl

of your fall.

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

The milkwoman shakes frost out of cans,
The knife-grinder haggles at my back-door.
I did not nurse you
 dawning, restless,
Soul of Russian snow and Russian earth.

You came to me in a dream
 as to youth—a sail,
As to youth—
 tender teeth of a girl,
As to youth—
 a squalling engine,
As to youth—
 glory in silver horns.
Go away, if you can,
 forgive, if you want to.
You fall like a net
 of whirling dots.
I am covered
 against blame
With the fluffy shawl
 of your fall.
In the kitchen, growling, burns the stove
The laundress brings deadly nightshade in the sheets.
I did not praise you,
 boundless
Soul of Russian snow and Russian earth.

But you came to me,
 as to manhood—rest,
As to manhood—
 books' unliving presence,
As to manhood—
 the commissar making his rounds

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

As to manhood—
 a bullet in a calm heart.
Farewell, if you trust,
 forget, if you remember.
With frost you cover
 the dark hills beyond.
I am covered
 against blame
With the fluffy shawl
 of your fall.
The snow-shoes pass by
Of those who go working.
In my brain is begotten
A new thought,
I did not betray you,
 deaf and obedient,
Soul of Russian snow and Russian earth.
I did not betray you, I did not nurse you,
I did not praise you with a noble verse:
Be cursed
 After
 Now,
 and before,
Soul of frightful snow and frightful earth.

[V. S.]

WATER COLORS

VLADIMIR LUGOVSKOI

Everyone has a forbidden house
Dear and important for memory.
As for me I avoid with great effort
A small stationery shop.

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

It is such a gray and dull one—
A paradise for blotters and post-cards.
Passing by—an amusing longing
Fills my soul, open for a second.

If I remain to stare at the window,
Wrapped in some kind of a forgotten offense,—
Then suddenly I remember a sea of warmth:
My school and bad marks and Ovid.

And all of childhood with its golden bustle,
World masterly conquered by Jules Verne,
And this enchanted idol of mine—
A set of cheap water colors.

I remember frankness—eye to eye,
And the dates of first doubts,
And the dark thirst to tell in a drawing
Of animals, trees and soldiers.

Soldiers? Yes. Wind. Warsaw. Marching.
February and labor pains of October.
And lasting till now our hard campaign
Through years gray and blood-red.

Now I save frankness and courage by drops,
To grow severer and deeper.
I do not paint.
But I am going to buy the colors.
Yes. Perhaps—it will help.

[V. S.]

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

LIFE

VLADIMIR LUGOVSKOI

I remember:
I was a child—at night, full of timidity
I entered the dining room.
Everyone was gone
Or they were busy in a way I did not understand,
And I was alone—the master of all things.

In a gown of beads the lamp was glittering at me,
In my direction swam the family of cups,
The giggling teapot crept with arms akimbo
And the samovar ardently sighed.
The sugar pot I pushed away, if I wanted,
It moved obediently aside to the right
Or to the left, according to command.

Such a secluded, prudent, warm
World of small things and gestures—
The samovar with its private life—
All this assurance and this easy freedom
Suddenly discomfited me.
The untrue and unsimple calm
Disturbed me, forcing me to run, to pull
The corners of the tablecloth and finally
Lead me to the window.

I opened it
And I grew numb and shuddered.

Pitchdarkness and dishevelled chaos
Bounded at me carried on the autumn wind
In flight of lanterns, bony dance of branches,

In diving or in upright gait
Of people passing by.

The squares of gloom tumbled about and perished,
The lindens flew up to fall again,
The unknown hunchbacked man
Waved and bent in the opposite window,
And small fat horses passed by
Mincing with their minute feet.
Hundredeyed houses stared at them
And high above in the unaccountable sky
With hissing sounds shot precipitate stars.

And I stood there, gulping noises and moisture,
Overflowing with the frightening tension
Of life understood for the first time.
I moved in thorny rhythm of branches,
I rattled in carts, I moved and stumbled
With the desire to run like a horse, to poke about,
To scatter myself in the wind,
To grasp the making of constellations.

This world, immense, bitter and stale,
Breathed sighing with its impatient body
And chained me for ever.
I turned back to the room's whispers
And saw the order of reddish cups,
The peace of wallpaper's and samovar's chatter,
The asylum of things, perfect in itself,
The liberty of making distinct moves—
And I laughed with a mad laughter.
I pointed with my finger at the window,
Caressed the room with my palms,
And understood so much—the things that later
I understood in wars and in my verse
And in the faiths of man.

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

I laughed that time and laugh again.
I open windows, shutters, doors,
To welcome the bitter wind of life,
To let the good and cruel earth
Tear down the thievish masks
From untrue and unsimple worlds,
Called by the name of private happiness,
Or lyric day-dream of success,
Or colored cup or art to live.
I became, it seems to me, a poet—at that time.
Forgive me for it, my enemies.

[V. S.]

LETTER

IOSIF OUTKIN

I didn't expect you today,
I tried to forget it, it's true,
But there came a bearded sailor
Who said he knew of you.

He is like you, dishevelled,
And wears the same wide pants,
He said you were in Kronstadt,
Alive . . .
But you wouldn't come back . . .

He stopped,
And we listened together
To the storm crying and laughing
And suddenly—baby's cradle

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

Seemed to me a coffin . . .
I understood him at once.
Beloved,
I beg,
Come . . .
As you are—
Without a leg.

[V. S.]

SONG OF THE MOTHER

IOSIF OUTKIN

He came and said:
I'm living still—
They couldn't aim
They couldn't kill.
They left my heart,
My heart is with me!
And again to start
I'm home with you.
Leaden nights no more
Will deprive me of rest.
And the medal he wore
Sparkled on his breast.
And the eyes—are strong
And the heart—is strong,
It's a joy to save your life when young.

But she spoke with sorrow
His gray-haired mother:

—My boy,
 I'm tired of tears and toil.
 I know the despair
 That is in battles,
 But am still more aware
 Of your scruples.
 Tell me:
 At the front
 Did you not turn to guilt?
 And the night heard:
 —Seventeen . . . I killed . . .
 And the years—are drunk,
 And the joy—is drunk,
 It's so sad to lose your life when young.

They were silent both,
 They said no more.
 And the soldier turned
 Away from the door.
 Behind him, as deep
 As the water's depth,
 Through the eyes of his mother
 Stared despair
 Anguish drove him forth
 Without rest,
 And the little medal
 Trembled upon his breast.

Mother, forgive . . .
 Mother, it's worse . . .
 Whom to believe?
 Whom to curse?

[V. S.]

ADDRESS TO THE SOUL

BORIS PASTERNAK

A woman out of gaol, if we remember you;
A prisoner of time, if we forget.
Eternal pilgrim, as many believe;
To me, a shadow without distinctive marks.

I may well bury you beneath a stone of verse,
I may well drown you: still you are that queen in chains,
Who crushed her head against the prison walls,
As the rising spring thaw flooded the fortress.

Entombed in the depths, you plead for pardon,
Cursing the times as others curse the guards,
While the vanishing years brush like dry leaves
Against the garden hedge of calendars.

* * *

Unlike every one else, not once a week,
Not once a day, but twice in a hundred years,
I implored you: to repeat to me distinctly
The words that make and create.

For you too cannot bear this intermingling
Of confession and of slavery,
How can you expect me still to be light-hearted?
To the salt of life what would you add?

[V. S.]

M A R L I

(Peter's house in Peterhof)

VISSARION SAIANOV

When in the turmoil of Petersburg the snow grows white,
And the setting sun splashes over broad bridges,
There races a rider on ice, his fur coat thrown wide open;
Gallop ing, he sings and never looks back.

In the rain's narrow mesh there are reddish horses,
As if wrapped in caparisons invented in a fairy-tale day,
And the wicked wind of pursuit disperses in a bubbling
Near some black villages bowed down to the ice.

Northward, where the lakes are always frozen
Like big cups, where under the thump of the axe
Deep in pine forests young shoots hold their breath,
Where Peter's martial floods thunder and howl . . .

Petersburg's truth is this broad-winged rider,
And the shipwrights preserve at the shore a house,
Which was an eagle-nest, in the days of warfare,
To all Petersburgs, Kronstadts and a hundred sea-ports.

Then at the dockyard, forgetting all sorrow,
Peter breathed fresh salt from the sea at sunrise;
Ever since, a wide breach was kept open by the ages
Over his harbor-plan at the heavy oak door.

[V. S.]

FROM THE BALLAD, WILLOW

VISSARION SALANOV

Is that the moon's gaze
On the stoop this night of motley?
Is that the water-carrier's
Face, pock-speckled?

No snows were there in winter
Prior to that parting.
My heart sucked in weariness
From a fierce adder.

Dnieper, is it not of me
That you cry this snowy night
In my cherished country,
My steep riverbanked?

I recall a Dnieper hut
At Guriev—a stopover—
At sunrise, and a blond
Fair girl came from it.

Shadows darken earlier
On the figured footpath,
She wore a light dress
And a black half kerchief.

She looked at the stranger
Wistfully as an orphan,
And pensively repeated
"My willow, willow . . ."

1939

SNOWFLAKE

STEPAN SCHEPACHOV

It's after four, but I can't sleep.
The snow-storm thickens in the breaking dawn.
Like clockwork turns the earth . . .
A hundred and a hundred thousand years
Will pass, and the remotest age (our dreams reach far)
Will trumpet the same way with storms.
In this remoteness, inapproachable to thought,
I wish to be, if nothing else, a snowflake,
To fly and drift above the earth
And glance just once at coming life,
To flutter like a little fuzz over a poplar
And softly melt away on a child's cheek.

[V. S.]

LITTLE GIRL

STEPAN SCHEPACHOV

She rocked the cradle. She was left
To nurse her baby-brother all day long.
Sunflowers like redhaired youngsters
Nodded their heads behind the fence.

She grew: she took the cattle fodder
And climbed up piles of straw;
She was unconscious with scarlet fever,
She fell through ice with heavy pails.

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

The neighbor's bull tossed his great head,
His right horn thrust out to gore.
Where did not danger threaten her?
Oh, I would have taken care of that little girl!

Maybe my strength that comes from peasant fathers
Still slept under the weight of time,
And I was not begotten yet:
That little girl carried my life.

[V. S.]

MONOLOGUE FROM "KNIGHT JOHN"

ILJA SELVINSKY

It dawns over my Rus . . . my native land!
Your simple width is dear to me,
Your brooks in alder groves,
Cheerless and tired fields,
And in the sky—the silver song.
Beautiful is Venice resting
On her hundred islands near the blue,
The light-blue, golden water.
Magnificent is her cathedral, wrapped
Like time in ages of meditation;
Young women are beautiful there too,
Gliding along Old Procurations
Somewhere in a side-street for a date.
And the smells of Giudecca! The oil of fish
Unites with lemon shreds; and melons . . .
With scarlet little peppers . . . and sea and sea!
Wonderful Venice . . . But with a light heart
I changed you for these fields

And huts . . . My dear ones,
 My cursed shabby huts . . . Arise!
 Take pickets, hay-forks, axes—
 And we shall go against the red-haired tyrant
 And shall enthrone a tsar of our own,
 A peasant tsar, although of kingly blood,
 But he shall serve us to the last of his heart-beatings.
 Somebody ploughs there . . . It seems to me a woman.
 It seems, I could right now, with my soul
 Embrace all of my native land,
 As does the sky! With these fields here,
 With this valley, with this tired old horse,
 With this very same old peasant's coat
 Behind the plough . . . She is exhausted . . .
 Her mujik is gone away . . . Perhaps
 He is among my warriors.
 Come on . . . Forelocked, come on . . .
 Forward . . . Behind her paces a rook
 Like a damned official after arrears.

1939

[V. S.]

IN PRAISE OF FOX RAISING

ILJA SELVINSKY

Baudelaire's black cat
 And Edgar Poe's raven
 Are simply gray flat
 Facing this smelling
 Canadian silver fox.

When he grows torpid
 Crook-backed, with staring eyes,

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

His grizzly head-dress,
Making him twice as black,
Glitters—a silver tress.

Then—his fur velvet
Sounds a Rubinstein theme
As if himself the Demon
In academic hell steam
Grabbed the paint brush.

He dips it in Tartarus abyss
And gets so black a back-ground
That it frightens him, poor darling.
He pulls the heavenly bell
Knocking down the toll of stars.

That's how is born a Canadian
Silver fox with ease.
(Length inches sixty and six,
Span thirty three and thirteen,
Tail thirty eight. Please).

[V. S.]

JOURNEY IN KAMCHATKA

ILJA SELVINSKY

The river, at first, three miles across,
Pours into a passage all of a sudden,
Into a narrow, tendinous entrails
Of rock playing leap-frog.
Boisterous green. Chirrup of birds.
Severe canyon of mountainous gothic.
“Checks”—it is called here,

But I would say—"Purple Canyon,"
 But I would say, melting with joy
 At the colors like oils—"Alley of mirrors"
 Or else, inclining to sculpture—
 The "Zoo of Stone."

* * *

And again, serenity for many miles,
 And again the usual mirrory course,
 But no . . . your pardon: surprisingly now,
 The stream starts to flow within four shores.
 To the right and the left, quite ordinarily,
 Regular uproar of wild side-scenes,
 But in the middle—many an island,
 Twisted about, like garden beds.
 As though not woods they were,
 But the park of Versailles,
 A kingly garden in flowery flames.
 And, it seems, playing lightly with fate
 The brocaded age has returned again.
 And, it seems, with a sneer, a faun flashes,
 Wrought in bronze or, by some Paolo
 Sculptured, there sparkles a group of swans.
 Never yet have we seen elsewhere
 (Wherever stones make circles in water)
 So admirably feudal,
 So perfectly noble a river.
 Not even the curtsies of the lady Rhone,
 Nor even the bows of the knightly Rhine,
 Not the posing Neva, unaware of her depths,
 Nor royal Danube, four times crowned,
 Oh no, their signatures are peasantly crooked
 Compared with this haughty,
 This class-hatred-stirring,
 This aristocratic flourish.

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

Suddenly, the heart sinks like that of a rabbit.
Just like that. For ever. To be still.
We pour into somewhere, excessively stunning,
Into the most elaborate spot in the world.
A vast military square whirls in a circle
Bathed with a radiant flood
And from the centre, like shadowy alleys,
Flow many canals, some straight, some crooked.
This is the Parisian Place de l'Etoile,
This is the sun of all possible waters,
Sparkling with arrows of steel.
And it seems there are hundreds.
All around, to dazzle the eye—
Scenery, scenery, scenery.
This place would honor
Any majestic metropolis.
A roan sea-eagle, swooping down from the heights
Casts a reflection of such splendor
That, aiming at its watery double,
We pierce the heavenly bird in the shoulder.

[V. S.]

OUR BIOGRAPHY

ILJA SELVINSKY

Go on, scourge my lips with the whip,
With chains and hooks drag out the cry.
I am—as all poets—the heart of statistics:
My naked speech is the voice of the crowd.
Verily I say unto you: not with epilepsy
But with the breath of the masses my soul goes wild.

My teeth echo the whistles of my pals.

What kind of generation are we? —Think us over.

When the monarchies were smashing each other— remember?

We were growing up amidst all sorts of "No"s,

Our nerves without fats, without sugar,

Were on edge, husking of marantic disease.

We had no youth as told in books for children,

Our little brows were with wrinkles old.

In mended trousers we limped to school

On pinching seams of our darned stockings.

And so, full of bile, we pushed on through schools,

With blue shadows under every rib,

With muffled voices like a pack of wolves—

The dense legions of my generation.

And as soon as we learned Marxism,

Deprived of class-backbone,

To bleed white with our spontaneous faith

We rushed into smoke, along blue planes.

And if to this faith there were also knowledge

Instead of only utopic roots—

We would have found our political corner,

Under a banner of our own blood.

But there raved posters, tribunals, papers,

All the others were in the know, and were firm,

We only swallowed this and the other,

And didn't know how to fill the gaps.

That's why the pronouncers of "truths,"

Who could understand only books,

Spoke of us as "Adventurers . . .

Revolutionary rabble . . . riff-raff."

With what teeth to hold back our curses . . .

How to knock into your heads, that when drunk with war

We were pursuing an unknown friend

In the same direction where we saw the foe.

That, having mastered the diagram of history,

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

That because of our age, our heart, our ideology,
And, what's more—our social fate,
We couldn't now escape the proletarian class.
Comrade! You there! In the docks!
You there! Making locomotives wail!
Consider us, switch our nerves onto your circuit,
Tune us in, like any of your plants.
So that we too may love our republic,
With our blood, seriously, without a false show.
And escape the yellow ranks of soft faithful contributors
To National and International revolutionary funds.

[V. S.]

A TREATISE ON IMMORTALITY

VADIM SHEFNER

Maybe we do not die at all,
And death is an invention of grave-diggers
And we believe them, being simple minded.
Maybe death is only a disease:
You lie in bed and lie some more and you recover
And then when you get up—life goes on.

But no—a trifle makes your relatives
Call doctors, they study you with little mirrors
And for appearance take your pulse and, sure enough,
They call a coffin-maker, and he—he knows his way.
They will also put me sadly in a longish box
Some day, I am sure,

And cover me with lumps of clay.
 And getting cold I will awake, still sleepy.
 I will stretch my hand, half numb
 For cigarets and matches
 That I keep always on my little table
 But no—certainly I will be deceived.

... All this I have invented. I know
 That we are mortal, I know it very well:
 The undertakers and physicians are right.
 But I loved so much the cold transparence of the garden
 And singing birds and drops of dew
 On flower cups at sunrise hour,
 And the aloofness of some humming trains
 And wind that swayed the heads
 Of springy pine trees . . .

I liked movement,
 I was in love with all big cities—
 With those that I have known and also the unknown,
 But most of all I loved my own
 Where every little hollow of the concrete
 I learned by heart.

But I believe in immortality. Let me
 Rot a hundred times under the earth
 And let the rocks become a little heap of sand
 And let the rivers dry, that in my time
 Were boasting with their waters,
 Let the design of seashores change
 And let new stars flame up . . .

The Hour of Immortality
 Will come. Fire and earth and air and water
 Are subject to us not in vain.
 I know: the time will come

When the fifth power—Immortality
 Will be conquered on a blessed day.
 It will be accomplished
 In the perfect calm of white laboratories.
 The men of science will find
 The formula for eternal life.

More centuries will pass. Death
 Will be forgotten by men. The word itself
 For them will become an abstract notion,
 As immortality for us.
 They will forget all the sad rites
 They will forget all funeral orations.
 They will have no bereaved to be obliged
 To carry bloodless, dry immortelles
 And chrysanthemums that reek decay
 And cloying lilac—
 hence
 The earthly flowers will bloom only for the living.

The coffin-makers then
 Will have to change their profession,
 Some of them will turn to sport, some others
 May even become literary critics,
 Again some others will be faithful
 To their tools, but will find other use,
 They will make chairs and tables, stools and other
 Important things for daily life
 And also pianos and spinets.

And soon nobody will remember graves
 Perhaps only sweethearts meeting sometime
 (What can you ask of them) and parting
 —As it has always been—will plight their troth
 Of faithfulness till their grave,
 Not truly knowing what it means.

That's how death will leave the earth
 And men will forget her. The cities
 By and by will merge into one
 And will be covered with one roof
 And in the world there will be spring eternal.
 No mud, no snow, no frost.
 (But not to make the skiers too unhappy
 They will be given as possession
 A piece of space beyond the polar circle . . .
 And nothing will be built there ever.)

Living will be nice and easy.
 And yet I am quite sure
 The future dwellers of this planet
 Will not forget us at their feast of life.
 They will establish a special day—
 A day of mourning, of universal sorrow,
 In memory of those that died before them.

On that day no songs will be heard
 On all the earth, and everywhere it will be quiet
 And men will remember us
 And visit ancient graves
 And adorn them with flowers.

Soon the outer space will be invaded
 By armadas of interplanetary ships.

But just before departing from the earth
 Most certainly each man
 Will meditate at length on what to take
 Along as souvenir of this abandoned planet.

Perhaps some queer fellow,
 An amateur of forgotten languages,

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

Will enter the archives and burrowing in the dusty piles
Will stumble upon this book
And read then in a faded page
That I have foreseen this hour.

1940

[V. S.]

R Y E

ALEXANDER TVARDOVSKY

Rye, rye . . . the field road
Leads I do not know where.
Long hanging wires
Lazily groan over the fields.

Rye, rye . . . up to the blue vault.
And all you can see far away
Is the bobbing cap of a horseman
And a little truck swimming in dust.

The rye is tired. The time has come.
It is so heavy—and with the field
It bends down to the road, giving away.
It leans over, it needs support.

The ear, so tightly stuffed,
Four-edged and golden,
Seems tired of holding the bales and wagons
Of all the bread above the earth.

[V. S.]

OLK TRENDS IN SOVIET POETRY*

ALEXANDER KAUN

I

is only natural that with the rise of the masses and their presence in national life, folk motives should assume a growing dominance in Soviet arts. The presence of folk motives in literary expression is quite notable, both in illiterate folk-productions and written poetry. The keynote, in the latter, was struck by the October Revolution. In its most significant record, *The Twelve*, Alexander Blok interpolated passages reminiscent of the *chastushka* tone and swing. The *chastushka* is primarily a village ditty, anonymously composed by local wits on some current event, the pattern, epithets, and tune remaining traditional, with slight variations. Demyan Bedny owed his popularity in a large measure to his *chastushka*-like ditties that spread like wildfire during the civil wars, and were sung by soldiers and civilians alike. Even Mayakovsky, an urban poet if there ever was one, made abundant use of the *chastushka* rhythm and vocabulary, especially in his journalistic verses and placards. The ancient epic *byliny*, the *byliny*, and other forms of folklore, including song, story-tale, ritual verse, have fed the Soviet muse in ever increasing quantity. For illustration one may turn again to Demyan Bedny, who borrowed lavishly from the folk-treasury for his fables, tales, long narratives, and plays. A number of younger poets have followed in this direction. Among them, Alexander Prokofiev has been particularly apt in employing folk-lore motives and methods in his poems of the civil wars and of the present village.

2

Russia has always been a singing country, the song often serving as the only outlet for the untutored and oppressed masses. In

Excerpts from a survey of Soviet Literature, in progress.

recent years the popular demand for new songs, expressive of contemporary themes, has prompted a good many poets to compose both modern "romances" and verses in the style of folk-songs. The intensive translation of the literature and folklore of national minorities, stimulated by the official Soviet policy, has further enhanced the spread of the song-*genre*. Unlike other forms of poetry, the success or failure of a song is conclusively proven by its popular acceptance or rejection, allowing of course for the contributory role of its musical composer. Young poets like V. Gusev, S. Mikhalkov, A. Surkov, and particularly V. Lebedev-Kumach, have eclipsed other and better poets in the measure of acclaim they have received for their songs. The extremely critical attitude of Soviet audiences, and their growing sense of discrimination, may serve as some assurance that the popularity of a song is not attributable to cheapness or low standard. As a sample of these songs one may cite "Song of the Motherland" by Lebedev-Kumach, typical in its simplicity and in the patriotic sentiment that has increased of late in intensity. Such a song (it was composed for the film *Circus*), once it hits the mark, is caught up by millions of Soviet citizens via the screen, the radio, the platform, the printed page, and becomes part and parcel of the folk repertory. Here is an almost literal translation of this song.

REFRAIN:

Vast is my native land.
Has many forests, fields, rivers.
I know of no other country
Where man breathes so freely.

From Moscow to the very borderlands,
From the southern mountains to the seas of the north,
Man goes up and down as master
Of his immense motherland.

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

Freely and broadly life everywhere
Flows, like opulent Volga.
For youth all roads are open here,
Full respect for old folks.

REFRAIN

Our fields no eye can embrace,
You cannot recall all our cities.
Our proud word "tovarishch"
Of all fair words is dearest to us.

With this word we are everywhere at home—
No blacks, no colored folks for us.
This word is familiar to all,
It finds us near ones far and wide.

REFRAIN

A spring breeze wafts across our land.
Day by day 'tis merrier to live,
And no one in the world knows better
How to laugh and to love.

But severely we shall frown our brows,
Should an enemy design to break us.
Like a bride we love our motherland,
We guard her like a tender mother.

After the adoption of the 1936 Constitution, Lebedev-Kumac added these verses:

At our table everyone feels welcome,
Each rewarded for his merits.*
With golden letters have we written
The Stalinite people's law.
The grandeur and glory of these words

* Reference to Clauses 12, 118, 119, 121 of the Constitution.

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

No years whatever shall erase
Man always has the right
To education, rest and work.

REFRAIN

3

Closely allied to the song is the ballad, which has grown popular both in recitation and song. The prevailing theme is personal and mass heroism in the revolution, the civil wars, and the reconstruction period. Typical of such a ballad-song is M. Svetlov's "Grenada," which has taken the country by storm. It is one of Svetlov's civil war pieces, written before the recent conflict in Spain. The appeal of "Grenada" is due to such of its balladic merits as fantasy and grim humor, coupled with an ingenuous internationalism.

G R E N A D A

We rode at a trot,
We sped into battle,
The song "Little Apple"
Held in our teeth.
Ah, this little song
Hovers to this day
Over the young grass,
The steppe's malachite.

But a different song,
Of a far-away land,
My buddy carried
Along on his saddle.
He sang, glancing all the while
At his native fields:
"Grenada, Grenada,
Grenada of mine!"

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

This little song
He has learned by heart.
How came Spain's melancholy
To this Ukrainian?
Answer, Alexandrovsk,
And Kharkov, reply:
Since when have you begun
In Spanish to sing?
Tell me, O Ukraine:
Does not 'mid your corn
Lie the shaggy cap
Of Taras Shevchenko? *
Wherefrom, my buddy,
Comes your song:
"Grenada, Grenada,
Grenada of mine!"
He is slow in answer,
The dreamy Ukrainian:

"Little brother, Grenada
I found in a book.
A pretty name,
A high honor.
In Spain there is
A Grenada county.
I left my hut,
I went to war,
The Grenada land
For to give the peasants.
Farewell, my kinsmen.
Grenada, Grenada,
Grenada of mine!"

On we sped, dreaming
Of mastering quickly

* The celebrated Ukrainian poet (1814-1861).

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

The grammar of battle,
The battery language.
The sun now rose,
Now set again,
My horse grew tired
Galloping the steppes.
The squadron played
The song "Little Apple"
With bows of suffering
On violins of time.
But where, O my buddy,
Is that song of yours:
"Grenada, Grenada,
Grenada of mine!"

His pierced body
Slid down to the earth.
For the first time my comrade
Has left the saddle.
I beheld: over his corpse
The moon bent down,
The dead lips breathed:
"Grena . . ."

Yes! To a far-away land,
To a reach beyond the clouds,
Has gone my buddy,
And took along his song.
Since then his native fields
No longer hear:
"Grenada, Grenada,
Grenada of mine!"

The squadron failed to note
The loss of one warrior,
And the song "Little Apple"
They sang to the end.

Only 'cross the sky softly
 Crept, after a bit,
 A tearlet of rain.
 New songs
 Life invents.
 Let us not, buddies,
 Mourn for songs.
 Let us not, let us not,
 Let us not, my friends . . .
 "Grenada, Grenada,
 Grenada of mine!"

4

One offshoot of this movement toward folk-poetry may be seen in the fantasies of the gifted young poet, S. Kirsanov. Author of more than a dozen books, he has shown continuous growth and expansion. For a time, as a pupil of the early Mayakovsky, he was infatuated with formalistic tricks, producing verbal and syntactic oddities, his aspiration being

To plunge from the cliff of metaphors to the bottom—
 A diver after the pearls of words.

That early period served him as good training in mastering the intricacies of language, meter, rhythm, and sound potentialities. To that time belongs his translation of Verlaine's *Chanson d'automne*, which in musical perfection and closeness to the spirit of the original eclipsed the numerous preceding versions. Omitting his subsequent phases, I am going to mention only his latest, fairy-tales.

There was a time when Soviet pedagogues frowned upon fairy-tales as an opiate for the tender minds of children, breeding non-materialistic notions and superstitions. The huge success of Kornei Chukovsky's *Crocodile* and other nonsense-verses by

him, by Marshak, Zhitkov, and other brilliant poets for children and of the more recent Kirsanov tales, indicates the passing of the earlier view, along with other symptoms of what Lenin dubbed "leftist infantilism." In his three best-known tales, Kirsanov makes good use of his technical skill to blend the fantastic element with social problems of the day. Like all good children's literature, his tales make fascinating reading for adults: indeed designed for children, they gained over Kirsanov's earlier, largely formalistic efforts, in clarity, understandability, and easy flow of the verse despite the variety of meter and rhythm he employs at the occasion demands. His neologisms, hybrid words, onomatopoeies, and other oddities have the graceful naturalness of nursery rhymes, and neatly fit the subject. Though composed after the traditional model of fairy-tales, Kirsanov's narratives thrill the reader with their abundance of modern references, latest technical terms, and contemporary issues.

Kirsanov's finest success is his *Cinderella* (*Zolushka*). A masterpiece in form and plot, it may rank with *Alice in Wonderland*; there is more social pathos in its humor, however, than in its English counterpart. The subtitle is "A Poem of all Fairy Tales"; it contains, indeed, episodes from world-known fairy tales, such as the magic carpet and Red Riding Hood, or such Slavic themes as the Deathless Kashchey from the Firebird cycle. Kirsanov enhances the fun by placing the plot in our own time mingling the supernatural with telephone and radio, and alternating anthropomorphic devices with such realistic scenes as that of Cinderella's sisters preening themselves for the ball with the aid of up-to-date cosmetics. Kirsanov's deviation from the Grimm version appears at the outset, when the sisters day-dream of a prince "with a million to his bank account." On the family's return from the ball, the father, who has had too much to eat suffers from an attack of hiccoughs; he unbuttons his waistcoat and clamors for his favorite pill, "Dr. Julius' gilded pill." Cinderella is driven to town for the pill, and here begin her adventures in the snow-buried forest, and later in the city. Kirsanov

boldly mixes fantastic items from universal tales, here and there giving them a modern slant, skipping from archaisms to the latest technological cry, or to a village *chastushka*. To translate Kirsanov adequately one must possess the gift of Lewis Carroll. Here is a sample passage, stripped unfortunately of its bewitching rhythm and rhyme:

Out on the road steps Cinderella—
 She calls the ducks, the ducks comply.
 Sparrows screech in German: *zurück!*
 And share their paltry finds.
 Stradivarius-like writhes the cat,
 Washes his face for politeness' sake,
 And perching on the back-window ledge
 Up he strikes a grand purruchio. . . .

Kirsanov varies the meter and tone, according to the moods he suggests—humor or satire, sadness or joy. The bantering tone changes to a highly emotional one, when the narrative touches on Cinderella's misery, her toil and vicissitudes, especially in the freezing scene at night in the forest. Here we have an epitomic presentation of man's economic slavery. The poem is interspersed with social implications, but without offensive obviousness: Kirsanov is an artist. With pathetic humor he describes the toys and luxuries in the shop windows, eager to fall into the frozen little hands of Cinderella, who gazes at them longingly from the street. Kirsanov emphasizes the original motive of this ancient tale, the motive of have-nots *versus* haves. The poem ends on a major note, in an apotheosis of Cinderella amidst marvels and stunts, from the oldest conceptions of human imagination to dropping parachutes and somersaulting planes.

5

A curious mixture of epic and fairy-tale may be found in A. Tvardovsky's *Muravia Land*. The author knows intimately the village, its speech and lore, and its problems. Like his two pre-

vious poems of Soviet peasantry, this one, his best, though saturated with village atmosphere, differs significantly from Soviet rustic poetry. Tvardovsky's peasant is free from the burlesquerie one finds in Demyan Bedny, nor is he endowed with the mystic sweetness and other-worldliness of Kliuyev and Essenin. He faintly resembles Nekrasov's peasant, without the halo that the "penitent nobles" bestowed upon their victims, the gadflies of their conscience.

Muravia Land abounds in folkloristic features, such as legend, superstition, ritual song and dance, sayings and proverbs. But these do not protrude as superimposed ornamentation; adroitly they are woven into the body of the poem and appear inseparable from its pattern. What prevents these traditional forms from sounding remote and frozen is the mass of modern concepts and terms poured into them—the radio, the tractor, the collective farm, the soviet. The *chastushka*, for example, is made use of as to structure and tone, but its theme suggests the radical change that has taken place in village conditions. This is illustrated in the festivities which occur early in the poem and toward the end. On both occasions Tvardovsky mingles the old and the new with skill and social insight. In the first instance village *kulaks* carouse and swill vodka in memory of those of their ilk who have been dispossessed and exiled. They shout and drink and weep with abandon, in full knowledge of their doom as a class. From the frankness of their loosed tongues we learn of their sense of self-importance as opulent farmers, as well as of their undercover machinations against the government collectors of grain. One of them, presumably the host, strikes up a song, old in words and tune, but quite timely in its allegoric application to what he considered the oppressive new order:

"Wherefore, God's birdie,
Dost not peck grain seeds?
Wherefore, tiny one,
Dost not sing loud songs?"

Little bird answers:
 "Life in a cage I relish not.
 Throw open my prison cell,
 Into the free I will fly."

More elaborate is the description of a wedding feast on a collective farm, as the story draws to an end. An abundant harvest has been gathered, a red flag waves over the bride's hut, and the revelers are gay and free from care and worry. We witness the seemingly immutable conservatism of peasant customs and conventions in their wedding ceremonies, their dances, songs, drinking toasts. Here is the old mother, recalling her own joyless youth, at the time when wife-beating was accepted as a sign of respectability, to be anticipated by every bride. She sings a traditional lament, with references to the little swallow that must fly to foreign lands, and to the orphaned maiden going off to a home of strangers. Traditionally the bride is here expected to shed floods of tears, but the young people of today's village refuse to weep for what is past and gone. Tvardovsky gives expression to the cheerfulness of the new village in a superb passage, describing a folk-dance to the music of an accordion, the rhythm fittingly reflecting the sounds and movements. As customary, the music and dance alternate with a song (or are accompanied by one). A common *chastushka* is given here, with the words slightly changed to give it a new twist marking the modernization of "Holy Russia":

Out steps an impish girl—
 Make way, dancing choir!
 Her new white skirt
 She plucks with two fingers:

"They've tried to marry me off,
 Talk me into it they've failed.
 I don't want to leave the commune,
 Not even for marriage sake.

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

'What sort of lad are you?'
I'll ask the lad.
'You're a lad all right, but not a flier.
As for me, I want a flier.' "

The burden of the poem is the ancient theme of a man setting out in quest of the Promised Land. Nikita Morgunok, unwilling to join the collective farm, harnesses his horse and leaves the village to journey toward the legendary Muravia Land. Morgunok is neither a *kulak* nor a pauper, but of the category made much of by Lenin—a *serednyak*, a "middler," that is, a peasant just above the point of starvation. Morgunok clings to his puny, but private, property with the tenacity of a hereditary husbandman. Tvardovsky shows both sympathy and understanding in his portraiture of this vanishing species, the individual landholder in the Soviet Union. One must realize the difficulty for a young Soviet poet, born into the new order, to depict attachment to property without rancor and mockery. Morgunok is rendered decidedly likable in his love for the soil and its gifts, even for the arduous toil it entails. The poetization of the sinful feeling of proprietorship is particularly apt in the description of Morgunok's devotion to his horse, an animal of rather indifferent points but of remarkable intuition and wisdom; in fact, it is the horse alone with whom its master takes counsel on the eve of his departure for Muravia Land. Soviet readers are introduced to a proprietor whose passion for ownership emanates not from greed for acquisition or exploitation, but from an inherent love for earth and beast; such a passion they may condemn as old-fashioned, yet not as vicious. It is this passion, however, that impels Morgunok to flee from the collective: he does not trust his beloved soil, his friendly horse to an impersonal organization that "regiments" the individual farmer. His ideas and ideals are those of a petty proprietor, a "rugged individualist," as is evident from his conception of the Promised Land:

... Muravia the ancient, Muravia Land.
 To the length and to the width
 The land is your own, all round.
 Plant, if you will, just one seed—
 But, then, it's your own.
 Don't have to ask anybody,
 Yourself alone you heed.
 Going to reap? Reap away!
 Going for a drive? Drive away!
 All you see before you is your own,
 Just stroll about and spit at ease.
 The well is yours, the firs are yours,
 Even to all the fir-cones.

All year long, both summer and winter,
 Ducks dive in the lake.
 And, God save the mark,
 There is no *kommunia*, nor *kolkhozia*.^{*}
 To all peasant rules and customs
 Muravia is faithful.
 Muravia, Muravia—
 A jolly fine land!

Like millions of other pre-revolutionary peasants throughout vast Russia, Morgunok is "in the grip of the soil," to use the phrase of Gleb Uspensky. He dreams of unmolested private ownership as the peak of happiness, his ideal exemplar being the local *kulak*, Ilya Bugrov, wealthy shopkeeper and hoarder of grain on the sly. If he could only rise to Bugrov's level, to be in a position to exchange greetings with him as with an equal, to have the honor of entertaining him in his hut,

To chew the rag on this and that
 To hum a song with half-closed eyes,
 Then arm in arm, the two of them,
 To stroll for a look at the fields of grain.

^{*} Commune; collective farm.

Such is Nikita Morgunok, a typical *serednyak*. Tvardovsky's task is to bring him to the collective farm, by convincing him, empirically, of its superiority over individual landholding. This is a gradual process, as in the case of millions of Morgunoks. Our Morgunok's Odyssey proves instructive; it cures him of many superstitions and of his credulity, and in the end, of the Muravia utopia. Cheated and robbed of his beloved horse by the fugitive *ex-kulak*, Bugrov, in return for Morgunok's friendship and road hospitality, the gullible *muzhik* suffers his first disillusionment. Searching for his horse, he looks into a settlement of gypsies, traditional horse-thieves. To his amazement, even the gypsies have changed their ways and are living a settled life in a model collective farm. Morgunok's prejudices are strong enough to keep him from accepting the proffered gypsy hospitality. He is unaware of the fact that in Soviet Russia, the gypsies, like other "inferior" nationalities, have proved their right to economic and cultural equality, and have their own schools, newspapers, and even opera house, where they perform Mérimée-Bizet's *Carmen* and Pushkin-Rachmaninov's *Gypsies* in their native language.

He wanders on, and comes upon a village of individual farmers. Here he expects to find an adumbration of Muravia. What he sees there, however, is poverty and stagnation. Half-starved peasants loiter about, whittle, scratch their heads, and philosophize on the advantages of their good old system. But the women refuse to see with their men's eyes. One of them draws a graphic comparison between their "individualistic" life and that on the collective farm, branding her kind "unpeople" as against the collectivist "people-people":

... "Lo, I go about with empty breasts—
Such a fine life, forsooth!
With people-people, wheat
Is bending in the breeze,
But with unpeople, straw
Strewn all over the court.

With people-people, children
 All day frolic in playgrounds,
 By a common table in a row
 Sit like turtle-doves.
 While mine live in this world
 Worse than grizzled piggies.
 My kids are not to blame—
 'Tis their dad that's guilty.
 As I look at this picture,
 With you loafing all day long,
 I am going to spit, drop it all,
 And run away, devil take you!"

Nikita Morgunok is shocked at the sight of triumphant individualism, but still he clings to his dream. He addresses Stalin himself, the man who has become a legend, in his life time, through the lands of the Union. The Stalin episode is one of Tvardovsky's numerous folk-incrustations:

It grew—at first muffled,
 Spread radio-like—the rumor,
 As an echo through the woods,
 So it ran across the land:
 Stalin is riding, his very self,
 On a raven horse.
 By waters blue, over hills and fields,
 'Cross highways and byways,
 In his greatcoat, with his little pipe,
 He rides straight ahead.
 Now he visits one district,
 Now another.
 He looks about, he chats with folks,
 And jots down in his little book
 Every bit right and proper.

Morgunok prepares a speech to Comrade Stalin, in which he pours out all his grievances and aspirations, not forgetting the story of his horse. He does not question the wisdom of destroying the old, nor the advantages of the new order. Only—he would like so much to get the taste of living on his own allotment, with his own horse, if only for a while. Later on he will join the collective, he swears he will. Would not Comrade Stalin do him a favor and issue a decree in that sense, that is, to let Nikita Morgunok remain for the time being an individual holder. . . .

Tvardovsky pictures thus the average middle-aged peasant about the year 1930, in the early stage of the collectivization process. With his head he accepts the new system as indisputably better than the old one—how can he help seeing that with the aid of mechanized methods collective farming results in better crops than backward individual farming? But his heart still yearns after a Muravia, where every bit is his *own*, where he may stroll about and spit at will. As against Bugrov, the *kulak* type, and Morgunok, the wobbly middler, Tvardovsky draws a portrait of Andrey Frolov, the personification of the new rural element, the collective farmer; his impact on Morgunok has an ultimately decisive effect. Of a powerful physique and strong of will, Frolov has fought all his life against exploiters and oppressors, has known misery and subjection, has been beaten by his enemies almost to death. Now he is a staunch upholder of the new order which frees a man from the thralldom of master and property. With Frolov as a guide, Morgunok observes the collective farm, its modern machinery, superior crops, growing opulence, and his heart of a soil-tiller is thrilled. More than by the tangible signs of well-being, he is impressed by the joviality of these farmers, their geniality and lightness of spirits, the absence of gloom and care and worry which Morgunok has been wont to associate with peasant life. The wedding feast, mentioned previously, sounds a climactic note in this rhapsody of collectivism. The scene ends in Morgunok's recovery of his horse from a fugitive priest who

rides up to the feast in the hope of earning a few coins by performing the obsolescent ceremony.

The conversion of Morgunok does not take place then and there. The author continues to mingle realism with fantasy, alternating psychological probability with the whimsicality of a fairy-tale. Morgunok, now that his horse is restored to him, leaves the hospitable collective farm, and proceeds on his journey to the land of Muravia. After days of travel, he comes upon a venerable ancient dressed as a pilgrim to holy places. The old man admits that he has discovered the futility of pilgrimaging to distant places, when so many good things are taking place so near at home; he is on his way back to his native village. Knocking about a great deal, he has learned that

“As for God—’tis not exactly that He ain’t,
But He’s no longer in power.”

Of this man of experience Morgunok inquires for directions to Muravia Land. There is no such place, he is told. Once upon a time there may have existed a Muravia, but it has disappeared, has overgrown with “grass and sward” (a play of words: *murava* means grass). Who wants this Muravia, anyway, when all around is life now so “handy”? Morgunok gathers that this “handy” land is nowhere but in a collective farm. The author leaves him on the road, ashamed of his long hesitation and fruitless quest, but ready to profit from the wisdom he has acquired:

“For now I can see all things more clearly
For thousands of versts around.”

Tvardovsky’s *Muravia Land* typifies the best of Soviet art today. Though rich and variegated, its form is simple and unobtrusive, finely adapted to the subject, now in iambs now in sing-song amphibrachs. The descriptions are clear and crisp, aptly conveying the very feel of field and soil, yet free from hack-

neyed epithets and canned lyricism. Above all the poem meets Tolstoy's first requirement of art—that it be understandable. The long fight against formalism and naturalism, in behalf of making art appreciable by the huge and exacting Soviet public, has not been in vain. The composer Sergei Prokofieff has stated the "difficult but interesting problem" for his field of art in these terms:

"Music written for the masses must of necessity be simple, but by no means reduced to repetition of old, worn-out formulas, nor—and that is even more important—must it cater to bad taste."

What Prokofieff has done with folk-motives in his music for *Alexander Nevsky* is suggestive of the way the problem has been solved by Soviet composers and other creative artists.

Understandable art does not have to be inferior art; witness the Bible narratives. Tolstoy's latter day fables and tales, written expressly for the common people, are a high achievement in form and style. Like Prokofieff, and recently Shostakovich, in music, Tvardovsky and other leading Soviet poets have successfully followed this path of producing work of the highest level, designed not for exclusive circles, but for millions of eager and critical readers.

6

It is a truism that literacy drives out folklore. Conversely, where illiteracy prevails one may still come upon oral literature, mostly in verse, composed by common people. The rate of illiteracy has greatly diminished in the Soviet Union, where beside the enforcement of compulsory school attendance by children, a vigorous campaign has been carried on for adult education. Still the number of illiterate elderly people remains considerable, especially in remote corners of northern Europe and among the various nationalities of Siberia, Central Asia, and portions of the Caucasus. Out of their midst have come forth in re-

cent years some bards of note, who perform their own compositions, usually to the accompaniment of a native instrument. A number of these bards have displayed extraordinary talent and originality, and have won the acclaim of the public and the critics, as well as recognition, decorations, and awards on the part of local and central authorities. As is natural for folk-literature, a large quantity of songs and tales circulate anonymously, now as an Uzbek shepherd song, now as a Kalmuck collective-farm parable or story, or a Buryat-Mongol lay, or a Swanetia hunting song. The bulk of these folk creations, anonymous and of known authorship, belongs to heroic epochs, being dedicated to Soviet men and women who have distinguished themselves in one way or another, whether as warriors, or as statesmen, aviators, explorers, shock-workers, and the like. As might be expected, the man who has caught the fancy of most of the folk poets is Lenin, with Stalin following in popularity. The singers use traditional form, stock epithets, hyperboles, and they do not hesitate to introduce supernatural forces even when they adhere to factual substance.

7

Of the epic singers of Russia proper, mention must be made especially of Marfa Kryukova, who has spent nearly all the seven decades of her life in the north, by the White Sea. Remoteness from centers of civilization is responsible in part for that region being rich in folklore. Marfa Kryukova comes from a family of reciters, *skaziteli*, who have kept up the tradition of *byliny*-chanters for generations, certainly from the time of Peter the Great. Marfa possesses a fine memory, her repertory exceeding one hundred and fifty items. Though hardly literate, she has a wide knowledge of Russian history, past and present, and a keen if at times over-simplified understanding of national and international issues. So steeped is she in the old lore that in ordinary conversation she is apt to revert to epic style and improvise in the *byliny* manner. Some of these improvisations have been written

down in late years, and a few of them published. Of her three best known "recitations" (*skazaniya*), one deals with Lenin, another with the celebrated civil war hero, Chapayev, and the third describes the Arctic expedition of Otto Schmidt, and the rescue of himself and his crew by Soviet fliers. She has the gift of clothing current events in ancient garb, and lending them the charm of the old and the fanciful. Thus, the story of long-whiskered Professor Schmidt stranded on an ice-floe and of the valiant aviators is given under the title: *Beard-to-the-Knee and Bright Falcons* (*Pokolyen-Boroda i yasnyie sokoly*). Chapayev (Kryukova calls him colloquially—Chapay) becomes a golden winged eagle flying over the glorious Volga steppes. Her greatest skill in blending modernity of theme with archaic solemnity is shown in her *Lay of Lenin*.

Marfa Kryukova gives an account of the important events in Lenin's life, coloring them in conventional *byliny* hues, but hardly ever distorting the essential historical truth. She begins her tale with the attempt of Lenin's elder brother, Alexander, against the life of tsar Alexander III. The opening lines ring with the majesty of stock parallelisms:

In those days, in former ones,
In those times, in olden ones,
Under Big-Idol Tsar of foul memory,
In Simbirsk fine city on Volga River. . . .

Alexander's attempt to free the people from the tsar, his failure, and his execution are narrated in grand style. On hearing of his death, the mother tears her white hair and sheds "hot tears" down the steep river bank, so that "from her tears the Volga water grows turgid." She calls on her children "to stand for their brother, to fight for beloved brother Sashenka, for his truth, the people's truth." The answer of her son Vladimir (Lenin) is a curious mixture of fairy-tale elements with such actualities as his Marxian preparation, or his opposition to individual terrorism as impractical romanticism:

"Grieve not, mother dear, do not sorrow.
 We shall, indeed, take a great vow amongst us,
 A great vow for people's truth to battle!
 Wet not, loved mother, thy fair face,
 Do not spoil thy bright eyes.
 For I feel in me a great power:
 Were that ring in an oaken pillar,
 I'd wrench it out, myself with my comrades,
 With that faithful bodyguard of mine—
 I'd then turn about the whole damp mother-earth!
 Well am I trained in wise learning,
 For I have read one magic little book;
 Now I know where to find the ring,
 Now I know how to turn about the whole earth,
 The whole earth, our whole dear Russia.
 Give leave, dear mother, for me to start my journey-road,
 Through cities I shall go, and cross many seas,
 I shall see-behold all the people,
 I must gather a great force—
 For to go forth and seek out that wonder-ring;
 With that ring we will turn the whole damp earth,
 Turn to the right side, the just one.
 That will not be the honor of a man of prowess,
 Nor a knight's glorious fame:
 To kill a tsar is a small gain,
 One you kill, another tsar mounts.
 We must, we must fight in another way—
 Against all princes, against the nobles all,
 Against the whole up-to-now order!"

Thus mingling fact and fancy Kryukova proceeds to describe Lenin's efforts to gather together "peasants, tillers of the soil," factory workers, and "learned men," to form a "great people's force" for "wresting the wonder ring" and for the abolition of the "injustice of rich men." Arrested and exiled to Siberia, Lenin

warms his benumbed fingers by a bonfire, and in its light he writes "express letters," and sends them out to "all lands," instructing the people how to carry on the struggle. Deviating from history, Kryukova has a symbolic Ivan, a Siberian "not well-to-do Muzhik," help Lenin escape abroad. In a foreign town, "free from tsars and kings," he sits by a table and continues to write "express letters" on "how to fight against tsars and 'bourzhuys'." One night he hears a knock on the window; cautiously he opens the "oaken door," and beholds a fair maiden, by the name of Nadezhda, daughter of Konstantin (Krupskaya). She has escaped from a Russian jail, and has come to join him, to be to him "a helpmate, a helpmate and partaker, to be a faithful wife, a faithful and unchanging wife."

Ivan, the Siberian muzhik, advises Lenin of the Bloody Sunday (January 22, 1905). In substance the event is described correctly, in a simplified version of the "villainy" of the tsar, of his uncle Grand Duke Vladimir, and the perfidious priest Gapon. Lenin takes leave of his wife, mounts a snow-white horse with a black mane and tail, and after many days and nights he reaches the Moscow Sparrow Hills (now Lenin Hills). In the poem these hillocks become "steep mountains, famous Sparrow Mountains." From their peak Lenin watches his poor country, sees heads rolling in the streets, people dragged to prison, exiled, shot, and "all Russia cowed."

Later the war breaks out. "Sly and cunning Germania" desires to take possession of the lands of Russia. The tsar mobilizes countless armies and sends them down to "deep marshes" and up to high mountains, "higher than coursing clouds." But there is treason in the rear. While tsar "Nilolasha" drinks and brags, his wife reveals all military secrets to the kaiser, who addresses her as his "blood-kindred niece." This is fiction, of course, as is the item of one of her traitorous letters falling into the hands of Russian soldiers. The soldiers are "terrified"; they reckon that "things are bad, bad and unbearable," and resolve to bring an end to the war, "not to shed their blood in vain." The overthrow

of the monarchy, the arrival of Lenin, his speeches, his flight from Kerensky's police, his hiding place in a "little tent," disguised as a "little shepherd," are described with ingenuous charm. The October revolution assumes a fairy-tale aspect:

On a morning it was, on an early morning,
At the rise of the fair red sun,
That Ilich* stepped out of his little tent,
He washed his fair face
With spring water cold,
His face he wiped with a little towel.
As he played on his birch-bark horn,
The whole people heard him,
The whole people gathered and thronged.
They all thronged and gathered,
Up to that pillar the marvellous.
They gathered in a mighty force,
They took hold on the little ring, the magic one,
Hard it was to wrench the little ring,
With stout force they did wrench it,
Turned about glorious mother Russia land,
To another side, the just one,
And took away the keys of little Russia
From those landlords, from factory-owners.

The triumphant people entrust Lenin with the "golden keys of the whole land." Lenin proceeds to appoint "friend Stalin as an aid," he "takes into service men of common birth, of common birth and from among the poor," and it goes without saying that he appoints Ivan, the Siberian muzhik, a people's commissar. Kryukova enumerates some of Lenin's achievements, such as the termination of the war, and the nationalization of land, commerce, and industry. The people rejoiced, and "sang merry songs in contentment"—but not for long. "A dark storm-cloud rose over the land, over Soviet little Russia . . . Generals and con-

* Familiar appellation of Lenin, for Vladimir Ilich Ulyanov.

stables, landlords and factory-owners, princes and nobles, merchants exceeding wealthy ones" gathered together to conspire against the new order. The civil war was on. Alarmed by the attack of "ferocious lions and infamous dogs," Lenin summons out of the vast steppes "Klim the locksmith, glorious Voroshilov," and the "heroic red cossack Budenny from the quiet Don." These are joined by the troops of Vasily "Chapay" and "valiant Blücher." The white armies then "swayed, they shook and they quaked," and their generals appealed for help to "foreign kings." Help was proffered by these "with full pleasure": they desired to see a tsar reign over Russia, "they desired therefor to receive costly gifts"—Russian lands.

At this "troubled time" Lenin was wounded by a counter-revolutionary: "A fierce snake glided up, she stung, she struck leader-Lenin, barely missed his dear little heart, but she made a wound and a very deep one, the evildoer, a very deep and poisonous one." Lenin's wife sent for famous healers,

Herself she ran forth from the chamber,
 She ran straight to the garden green,
 She plucked grass-weeds,
 Plucked green leaves of every kind,
 Gathered and brought them in,
 And laid them on the hot little wound.

On regaining consciousness, the wounded leader summons Stalin, and urges him to go forth to the red army and rouse its courage "with his valiant strength and with his wise counsel." Stalin comes before the warriors, "rises in the stirrups," and makes a speech in the *byliny* style:

"Hey you, fellows, soldiers of the Red Army,
 Hey you, famous factory-workers,
 Hey you, peasants black-soil tillers:
 A time has come, a most hard one,
 A time has come, a most warlike one.

We must gather our last strength,
 With our valorous valor must we crush the enemies,
 Crush the enemies, scatter all evildoers.
 Vladimir Ilich has sent me to you,
 He is sick abed and moaning,
 On account of the evil snake, of the deep wound:
 Let us crush the enemy, then he'll get well!"

Needless to say, Stalin's speech had the desired effect. The red troops hurled themselves against the enemies, broke their ranks, pursued them day and night, and

Into the blue seas they cast all the yenerals:
 One yeneral with his army into our own White Sea,
 Another yeneral with his army into that Black Sea,
 A third yeneral with his army into that Western Sea
 (Baltic),
 A fourth yeneral with his army into the Far-East Sea.
 All other yenerals with their colonels,
 With the colonels and with the majors,
 They drove into miry swamps,
 And into deep rivers, rapid ones,
 And there they met their end.

All is well now with the Soviet lands, the peoples rejoice, and Lenin's health begins to recuperate. But—and here Marfa Kryukova scorns chronology and facts—the treasonable actions of Trotsky disturb Lenin's mind and aggravate his illness. The leader is dying. He bids farewell to Nadezhda Konstantinovna, "his faithful helpmate, faithful and unchanging one," and he hands over the golden keys of the land to Stalin, "his dear and true friend." The death of Lenin is recorded in the conventional *byliny* images:

It was not the fair sun has rolled
 Beyond those famous Sparrow Mountains,
 Nor beyond mother stonewall-Moscow,
 Nor again beyond those dark forests,

Nor beyond those orchards, all green,
 Nor beyond those seas did it set, the deep ones,
 Nor beyond those cities, all the diverse ones,
 Nor beyond the villages and little hamlets,
 Nor beyond creeks, quiet ones:
 Our fair sun has rolled down,
 Moreover the moon from beneath the sky,
 Moreover the dawn, the morning dawn,
 Moreover the star, the evening star.
 Our fair sun has rolled down,
 When into mother, into damp earth,
 When into the grave was laid,
 Was laid, indeed, Ilich our light,
 And covered with coffin boards.
 Birds flew up then like falcons high to the skies,
 Fishes then sank to the deep of the seas,
 Foxes-martens scampered over the islands,
 Friend-bears scattered through the woods dark,
 And people put on black clothes,
 Black clothes they put on, sorrowful clothes.
 To his grave they all thronged,
 Thronged all and came together—
Muzhiks those village-folk,
 Workers all from factories,
 Workers all of Soviet learning,
 No number and counting to all that came.
 Then all peoples burst weeping,
 In diverse voices of diverse tribes—
 The whole dear earth was drenched with hot tears. . . .

Amidst the lamentation of all peoples, Stalin proclaims the celebrated oath of loyalty to Lenin and his beliefs. The poem ends with a curious touch about the Lenin mausoleum on the Red Square, made, according to Kryukova's ornamental whim, out of precious stones:

Those stones all peoples carried up,
 Each people brought one stone apiece.
 And the peoples put up a little house of death,
 Therein lies Ilich, sleeps in peace.

8

True to its policy of fostering cultural expressions in the one hundred and fifty odd linguistic varieties of the Union, the Moscow authorities have given aid and courage to creators and disseminators of folk-poetry. Aside from the recognition of individual artists in this field, an attempt has been made at organizing them as a collective group. In the summer of 1939, a conference of folk-singers and reciters from all over the Union took place in Moscow. Most of them were old men and women who have preserved the hoary antiquity of song and tale traditionally intact. There was only a small nucleus of original composers, from among the Russian people and national minorities, who were inspired by the old lore to apply its forms to contemporary subjects. The singers and reciters, nearly all of them from the backwoods, were dazzled by the splendor of the capital and deeply moved by the hospitality and admiration they received from the authorities and from academic and artistic groups. At the conference they discussed regional and national problems, adopting measures to guard folk-riches, to cherish the heritage and to further expand it.

The Marfa Kryukova phenomenon is passing out of existence with the spread of literacy. Folk motives, however, are gaining in power and influence, and are finding a variety of ways for their expression in Soviet literature.

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A NOTE ON VLADISLAV HODASSEVICH

VLADIMIR NABOKOV

V_{LADISLAV} HODASSEVICH was born in the late eighties in Moscow and died in Paris in 1938. He had been living in exile since 1922.

He was the finest poet that post-war Russia produced, and the influence of his "neo-classical" style upon the younger generation of Russian poets, both in Paris and in the Soviet Union, has been quite exceptionally strong though less fruitful, in the long run, than that of Alexander Blok's "neo-romantic" poetry. I use these shabby textbook terms because any more personal attempt to define Hodassevich's rhythms and methods would lead me too far.

A little book of some 175 pages published in Paris in 1927 (*Sobranie Stikhov—Collection of Poems*—which he calls "my discarded snake-skin" in his dedication on the copy he gave me) contains practically all such poems of his mature years as he wished to preserve, and it is curious to note that Tutchet, the great 19th century poet, with whom he seems to have had a marked spiritual connection, was equally sparing of his genius. Hodassevich has also written a remarkable "*Life of Derzhavine*" (18th century poet) which will be admired as long as Russian literature exists. His extensive studies of Pushkin's life and versification placed him in the foremost rank of Pushkinian scholars; and I have encountered when translating the three poems offered here the same special difficulties that I did when tackling Pushkin. Simplicity and fullness of verbal perfection allied to an almost mathematical precision of imagery are harder to render than the colorful effusiveness of less limpid or less vigorous poets.

TRANSLATIONS BY
VLADIMIR NABOKOV

THE MONKEY

VLADISLAV HODASSEVICH

THE heat was fierce. Great forests were on fire. Time dragged its feet in dust. A cock was crowing in an adjacent lot.

As I pushed open my garden-gate I saw beside the road a wandering Serb asleep upon a bench his back against the palings. He was lean and very black, and down his half-bared breast there hung a heavy silver cross, diverting the trickling sweat.

Upon the fence above him, clad in a crimson petticoat, his monkey sat munching greedily the dusty leaves of a syringa bush; a leathern collar drawn backwards by its heavy chain bit deep into her throat.

Hearing me pass, the man stirred, wiped his face and asked me for some water. He took one sip to see whether the drink was not too cold, then placed a saucerful upon the bench, and, instantly, the monkey slipped down and clasped the saucer with both hands dipping her thumbs; then, on all fours, she drank, her elbows pressed against the bench, her chin touching the boards, her backbone arching higher than her bald head. Thus, surely, did Darius bend to a puddle on the road when fleeing from Alexander's thundering phalanges.

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

When the last drop was sucked the monkey swept
the saucer off the bench, and raised her head,
and offered me her black wet little hand.
Oh, I have pressed the fingers of great poets,
leaders of men, fair women, but no hand
had ever been so exquisitely shaped
nor had touched mine with such a thrill of kinship,
and no man's eyes had peered into my soul
with such deep wisdom. . . Legends of lost ages
awoke in me thanks to that dingy beast
and suddenly I saw life in its fullness
and with a rush of wind and wave and worlds
the organ music of the universe
boomed in my ears, as it had done before
in immemorial woodlands.

And the Serb
then went his way thumping his tambourine:
on his left shoulder, like an Indian prince
upon an elephant, his monkey swayed.
A huge incarnadine but sunless sun
hung in a milky haze. The sultry summer
flowed endlessly upon the wilting wheat.

That day the war broke out, that very day.

[V. N.]

P O E M

VLADISLAV HODASSEVICH

What is the use of time and rhyme?
We live in peril, paupers all.
The tailors sit, the builders climb,
but coats will tear and houses fall.

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

And only seldom with a sob
of tenderness I hear . . . oh, quite
a different existence throb
through this mortality and blight.

Thus does a wife, when days are dull,
place breathlessly, with loving care,
her hand upon her body, full
of the live burden swelling there.

[V. N.]

ORPHEUS

VLADISLAV HODASSEVICH

Brightly lit from above I am sitting
in my circular room; this is I—
looking up at a sky made of stucco,
at a sixty-watt sun in that sky.

All around me, and also lit brightly,
all around me my furniture stands,
chair and table and bed—and I wonder
sitting there what to do with my hands.

Frost engendered white feathery palmtrees
on the window-panes silently bloom;
loud and quick clicks the watch in my pocket
as I sit in my circular room.

Oh, the leaden, the beggarly bareness
of a life where no issue I see!
Whom on earth could I tell how I pity
my own self and the things around me?

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

And then clasping my knees I start slowly
to sway backwards and forwards, and soon
I am speaking in verse, I am crooning
to myself as I sway in a swoon.

What a vague, what a passionate murmur
lacking any intelligent plan;
but a sound may be truer than reason
and a word may be stronger than man.

And then melody, melody, melody
blends my accents and joins in their quest,
and a delicate, delicate, delicate
pointed blade seems to enter my breast.

High above my own spirit I tower,
high above mortal matter I grow:
subterranean flames lick my ankles,
past my brow the cool galaxies flow.

With big eyes—as my singing grows wilder—
with the eyes of a serpent maybe,
I keep watching the helpless expression
of the poor things that listen to me.

And the room and the furniture slowly,
slowly start in a circle to sail,
and a great heavy lyre is from nowhere
handed me by a ghost through the gale.

And the sixty-watt sun has now vanished,
and away the false heavens are blown:
on the smoothness of glossy black boulders
this is Orpheus standing alone

[V. N.]

TRANSLATIONS BY ISIDORE SCHNEIDER

MAYAKOVSKY EMERGES

NIKOLAI ASEYEV

"I never saved a ruble out of my writings."

MAYAKOVSKY

No disquiet of regrets
impels me to begin
this chapter;
nor hope to tempt
Fame proper or unkempt.

I do not flinch
under his white hot eye
nor fear his strength;
I fear lest my portrait pinch
his giant length,
be flat and dry
and give to the seeing
no sense of his fluid
hot tumultuous being.

Here on the wall
framed and glassed in,
silent and close,
his portraits peer out
dour and morose,—
stippled ash
of his living fire,
that was its own gust
to lift it higher.

Is this
that biographers

of every degree
drag to the publishers—
is this stuff
he?

His every little vein
ran with life
and in others
incited
answering life.

The Crimean nightingales
singing today
as they sang then—
he does not hear.

The same mists
huddle the peaks,—
and he not near.

The same Judas tree
wears its Spring wreath
that he no longer
walks beneath.

His thunder's
unstrung,
his last song
sung.

The since-born people
fill the land—so much,
only the statistic eye
can see them all—
whom his friendly life
can never touch,
nor his jokes call
to laughter —
who once
joked with a mountain;
whose lips
courted the siren ships
and turbulent ocean;
who had a drinking bout
with the sun—
the earth
their potion.*

Ah, how many events
without him to use,
have stepped into place
in the marching news!
He was not there to tell
when tense Barcelona
felt the first shell.

And new bees
their honeycombs fill,
and new snakes
their draught, distil.
And earth
making its checks and crosses
counting its losses

knows of the profit to be,
the maturing
inevitable
century.
The river deeps
will bear it;
the ore depths
will hear it.

Then sweat-gilt toil
self-emblazoned
will greet
life, honored and sweet.
We will know
what we waited so long
and knew before only
in the urging of song;
when with dry tongue
we called,
and behind stiff lips
hummed—
“Come!”

And the falcon voice
will startle the depths,
his song new sung!
Near us again
we shall hear him;
see him
unwasted
and young!

[I. S.]

(Reprinted from “International Literatu

* A reference to a poem by Mayakovsky describing a visit of the sun to him.

BORDERS

SEMYON KIRSANOV

ome future
 flagless
 day
 When no longer shall
 frontiers define
 a nation,
 Once more
 perhaps
 I'll make my way
 To Negorelye*
 station.
 before
 the once placarded
 pine
 Detrain the passengers
 of the fast
 express;
 And anxious mothers'
 nervous fingers
 twine
 While children
 round the panting
 iron monster
 press.
 Museum walls shelter
 the border post—
 A totem pole,
 a wooden ghost.—

You read the tablet,
 the marble white
 recorder
 Of a vanished
 order.
 "Here was
 the border!"

The children ask,
 "Border?—
 Who's that?"
 I stroke their heads,
 do my best
 to explain:
 "Not a 'who,'
 but a 'what';
 A place for passport,
 stamped papers,
 waiting,
 strain—"

"But Passport?—
 Who's that?"

As a pedagogue
 I've fallen flat.

"Well, long ago when you
 traveled

One of the principal border stations on the Soviet western frontier.

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

and you got off
around here,
Porters took your baggage
to the customs house
and you stood near—”

“Costumes house?—
Did they put on costumes?
Did they dance?”

Around me I throw
a helpless
glance.

“Well—
a sort of costume
you wouldn’t
understand;
They called it
citizen
of a foreign land.”

Incomprehensible little post!
Better to sit
at a train-window
hurled
Three miles a minute
across the
world,
Earth’s beautiful image
for your host,
Nowhere
disordered,
Nowhere
bordered!

Nowhere gendarmes,
officials,
frontiers—
Items for notebooks,
buried fears.
Forgotten words
that chill
no more,
With broken sleep
and dread of war.

But, not yet!
We fence an iron
“No!”
Around our borders
across which
lies
The swamp
of spies,
Now be
each passport
double checked;
Sound each trunk
for a double
deck;
Our dearest,
our most sacred
care—
Our border
guarded
everywhere!

[I. S.]

(Reprinted from “International Literature”)

VLADIMIR ILYICH LENIN

(*excerpts*)

VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKY

I
A Bolshevik
in tears?
Should a museum
put him
on display,
what a house
he'd draw!
Who ever saw
a Bolshevik
in tears!
Mamontov's riders
sewed us
in sacks,
with branding irons
fissured
our backs.
The Japanese
"pacifying"
for the yen
fueled
their locomotives
with our men.
To make sure
we were sealed
as dead
They served us
drinks of
boiling lead.
On January twenty-second

this same
human steel,
this fire-forged
man-iron
met;
in patient rows
sat down,
the great
soviet.
They finished off
some routine
bother,
then sat there
looking
at each other.
Chairlegs scrape,
dig holes
in the floor.
It's time!
It's time!
They wait—
What for?
Why
are their eyes
raw red
like meat?
Why
can't Kalinin
stand straight
on his feet?

Is he ill?
 What's up?
 Tell me!
 Tell me!

That?
 No.
 It cannot
 be!
 A sudden
 night
 blackens
 the ceiling;
 The bells'
 long
 unnecessary
 sound

chokes on its
 pealing.
 The lamps
 lose their
 light,
 and our faces
 their
 life.

Self mastered
 at last
 Kalinin
 stands straight,
 but his streaked face,
 wet mustache,
 limp beard
 and still weeping look
 betrayed

a Bolshevik
 in tears.
 Grief grips
 his lean hands,
 Grief clots
 his breast,
 drives in his
 veins,—
 "Last night
 ten minutes
 to seven
 Comrade
 Lenin
 died!"

2

The stuff of centuries
 has crammed
 this year.
 This black bordered day
 will see many
 centennials.
 We heard iron
 cry;
 we saw grief
 strike sobs
 from the iron
 Bolsheviks.
 The steadfast,
 the strong,
 with hearts
 iron hooped,
 who'd faced

death
 erect
 met
 this death,
 stooped.
 In its black drapes
 the Bolshoi
 Theater
 tossed
 on the square,
 like a mammoth
 hearse.
 Joy was a snail,
 but misfortune
 a race horse;
 The sun is blank;
 ice cannot
 glow.
 Sieved through black news
 this winter
 sheds
 black snow.
 In the brain
 of the man
 at the bench,
 the news
 rips
 like a
 bullet;
 and his stare
 spills slowly
 like tears
 on glass.
 A peasant never moved
 by the faces

and gestures
 of death,
 tonight wiped his face
 and startled his wife
 with the mud
 his hand
 left on his
 cheek.
 The stone stolid,
 the grim,
 the impassive,
 tonight
 cracked their shells
 bit their lips
 wrung their hands.
 Tonight
 children were like sober
 old men,
 and sober
 old men
 wept like children.
 Like a steppe wind
 over our lives
 howls
 our bereavement;
 the stunned land
 cannot believe,
 cannot yet
 believe
 That Moscow
 is a mortuary,
 that there lies
 the coffin
 of the revolution's
 son and father!

3

One thought welds worker,
peasant,
Red Army man.

Lenin is gone.
And hard now
's the road
of the republic
without him!

But panting
on mattresses
never
will smooth it.

Whom
shall we set in his place
and how
find him?

"A note,
Comrade Secretary:
Register tonight
the collective enrollment
of our whole plant
in the Communist
cell."

The bourgeoisie
stares;
the bourgeoisie
shivers.
Straight from
their benches,
four hundred thousand
themselves
bequeath;

four hundred thousand
marching,
twining
Lenin's
first Party
wreath!

"Listen,
Comrade Secretary,
enter this in the book . . .

We will replace . . .

We must
replace . . .

If I'm too old
here's my grandson
for the Komsomol!"

So Ilyich
even in death
remained

our best
organizer.

A million arms,
a sudden forest;
the forest
waves.

Red Square becomes
a living
red flag.

The line of march
is its living staff.

From the immense
living folds
once more

Lenin
living
speaks:

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

"Draw up
proletarians
for the final clash;
slaves stiffen

your backs,
straighten
your knees!"

[I. S.]

(Reprinted from "International Literature")

SOVIET PASSPORT

VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKY

Bureaucracy
like a wolf
I'd gnaw;
for stamped papers
I have no awe;
to any devil's dam
and her
son
I'd consign them all—
but one
Before
the suites
and cabin grooves,
from dim hands
passports
shine.
Impeccably
the suave inspector
moves—
I hand him mine.

At these he stares
with bored
indifference;
at those

smiles loop his lips
like Dion's.
For instance
note his
reverence
for the engraved
British
lion.

Magnetized
eyes
and a murmuring
lip
for the American's passport
official hands
rise
as if taking
a tip.
The Pole's passport
they handle
with insolent paws
Bullish disdain
On their
bullish jaws.
They goggle at it

like a goat
 at the views,—
 What if they choose
 to ignore
 its geographical
 news?

Not an inch
 veer their skulls
 for such.
 With the unblinking
 nonchalance
 of shore dicks
 the passports
 they take
 of the Dutch
 and other
 minor
 Nordics.
 Suddenly
 you'd think fire
 had caught
 the man's mouth;
 it twists
 like scorched paper.
 This dignity
 aper
 reaches a
 shuddering
 white hand
 out
 for my
 ruddy passport,
 which for officials
 and that sort

now, see,
 has become
 a hedgehog,
 a bomb,
 a twenty fanged
 snake,
 an Asian
 earthquake!

A wise wink
 creases
 the porter's eye.
 Your baggage
 you know
 he'll haul free.
 The cop turns a
 querying
 wink to the dicks,
 back to the cop
 the query
 flicks.
 O how they'd love
 to see me
 bleed,
 slugged
 crucified
 and third-degreed,
 for having in hand
 that challenging
 massword
 my hammered and sickled
 Soviet
 passport!
 Bureaucracy
 like a wolf

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

I'd gnaw;
for stamped papers
I have no awe;
to any devil's dam
and her
son
I'd consign them all—
but one . . .
which I pull
from my pants
as receipt

for a priceless
treasure;
and greet
with it all mankind.
Read,
envy me
elect of men!
I am
a Soviet
citizen!
[I. S.]

RETURNING HOME

VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKY

It's all one
whether I went
willing
Or at necessity's
boot-tip.
My steel words rust
The brass of my tuba
blackens.
Why,
under foreign rains
do I rot
and tarnish?
Here,
in tourist sloth
I lie,
Scarcely a gear
of my engines
turning,

I,
who am a Soviet mill
producing happiness.
A holiday flower
men may pick
after work?—
Not I!
Let the state
planners
sweat in debate,
assigning
my year's
output.
I await
orders from
the Commissar of Time;

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

Let them be tacked up on my mind!	the output of poems listed with tonnage of iron and steel.
I demand that my specialist's wages be paid to my heart in love.	In Stalin's Politburo reports let there be items on the labor of the poems,
My day's work's done, let my lips be locked;	
And the factory committee on hand to see them locked.	And graphs to show . . . how from the depths our workers reach the summit!
I want pens listed with bayonets;	[I. S.]

STRANGE ADVENTURE IN A SUMMER COTTAGE

VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKY

Sunsets blazing like forty furnaces— Summer steamed into July.	with singed crusts of roofs. And over the hill's back is the pit,
Even in the country with grass to our feet we waded in heat.	I suppose, where the sun goes, at night; only to rise again boil up a day again
Under the hill's shoulder the villages smolder	running over with light.

And this
day after day,
everything panting
and parching away,
got me sore.
I let out a roar.
I stood up to the sun
and put the case
right to his face.

"Hey you,
up there,
lolling in your steam bath.
Come down.
Have some tea,
and some words
with me!"

"On your way down,
before you retire
step in
I have some tea boiling
and some marmalade
spoiling,
step in
and warm yourself
here, at my fire!"

And as he,
solemnly,
kept on setting,
I kept
fretting.
"Just a little chat"
I said,
"I want to know

what keeps you beaming so,
while I, my dear,
sit here,
whatever the season,
and lose my reason
drawing posters with rhymes,
nine hundred times!"

What have I done!
Here comes the sun,
swarming up
with gigantic
ray stride!
Where to hide?

I
Try
to appear
self-possessed,
just a host,
calmly
greeting a guest. . . .

Through the garden
already
his great light
drives,
through windows,
through doors,
through chinks,
he arrives!

He's where?
there!
how near?—
here!

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

With a friendly
but too chesty
 roar
that staggers
 the door,
"I've broken
 my schedule
 first time
 since creation,
and a goggle-eyed
 gape
is all my ovation!
Where's tea?"

My eyes smarted,
the heat drove me wild,
I stumbled
and stuttered
and he
only smiled.
Somehow his shining
turned balmy,
turned mild.
Formalities then
were somehow forgotten,
sopped up
in humor
like moisture
in cotton.
We're at home
 with each other,
 I jawing away
 like a big brother.

of this
 and of that,
of a head
 and a hat,
and how Rosta*
 swarms
 with letters
 like gnats.
"Don't"
 booms the sun,
"take Rosta so hard.
Do you think
 shining is easy?
How'd you like
 to hang up in my place,
hang there
and shine!"

So we sat
through the night
he made brighter
 than day
with his overtime
 light.

Late we sat,
my arm on his shoulder
his arm going whack
soft,
 on my back.

Said he,
"You and me
are two of a wing.

* Abbreviation for the Russian name of the Russian Telegraph Agency for which Mayakovsky composed verse posters.

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

Let's soar
and let's sing,
let's flash together
on the world's gray puddle,
you with verses
I with light!"

So, riddled
the columns
of shadows,
so blasted,
Bastilles
of night,

as we fired
from double-barreled gun,
poet—sun,
volleys of verses
and light!

Together,
or each in turn,

we sing
and burn.
Should he tire,
sleepy-head,
let him set
to his bed.
In my turn
and my way
I dawn
full force
and
it's day!

To shine forever
and everywhere.
To last
to the world's last day!
Unstopping,
to shine,
that's our slogan!—
the sun's
and mine.
[I. S.]

LOST IN CONFERENCE

VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKY

I paint this mural of a Moscow dawn:
The meeting-magnetized, see them drawn,
To the Gen—
Com—
Polit—
Educat—.
See them swarm!

Follow at your risk!
In a paper rain you'll be drenched.

You come to interview
a mere fifty-one or two—
the most important;
but every desk
empty,
everyone fleeting
to a meeting.

"Comrade, a moment,"
you implore,
"Ivan Ivanich, where? I've tried
to reach him since antiquity.
Till I see him I won't stir."

"Ivan Ivanich had to confer
with the United Bureau of A and B."

You pant up the hundredth stair
wan with climbing and despair.
Again you hear
"in an hour, meanwhile
why not enjoy the fresh air?
They're at a conference
negotiating the purchase—
important, can't stop—
of a bottle of ink
from the Region Co-op."

An hour passes.
You walk into vacancy.
No clerks in sight,
no lads, no lasses

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

to give you a greeting,
even to hand you another stall.
There's the reason,
posted on the wall.
"Under twenty-two years, all
to the Komsomol meeting."
Ivan Ivanich I found at last.
Into the room I burst, possess,
wild curses spattering
from my breast,
eyes dilating.

What's this?—
Halves of men lolling!
Torsos debating!
Stiff stands my hair.
The other halves, where?

The secretary's cool
official voice
halts me retreating.
"We're here—and we're there,
at a second meeting.
We had no choice.
How simultaneously
hold two meetings?
The problem's solved.
Ourselves we halved;
torsos here,
the rest
there."

Those half-men meetings keep
my night from sleep.
But with a soothing dream

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

I meet the sun—
One more conference
one last conference,
one
to liquidate all conferences!

[I. S.]

TWO HORSES

JAMBOUL *

I met my life's dawn in the saddle,
But my nag was as thin as a raddle.
She buckled to every steppe breeze
And a wind shook her down to her knees.

Yet gaily I rode the plain,
And I sang as I rode, I poured
Song over my adored.
With her silver laugh at my nag,
The lovely one shamed my brag.

Sad self, sad songs I took afar
To every fair, to each bazaar;
So roamed to every steppe aoul
On his poor nag the bard Jamboul.

When Spring thaws make the stream flow wide,
The bosses to the roundup ride;
They count the colts, the Spring's increase;
They stroke their beards and are at peace.

* Jamboul is a Kazakh bard, of Soviet Central Asia. Such bardic poetry, composed by recitation, not in script, is translated into Russian and other Soviet languages and is widely popular.

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

Them, counting, how my mad eyes followed!
Salt tears of envy how I swallowed!
I too counted—a horse of smoke,
A steed that vanished when I woke.

At night he came, brought by my word,
The chestnut racer, pride of the herd.
Hotly he neighs and bids me come,
Loud on the turf his quick hooves drum.

But I rode out my dreary youth
On a bony nag as sharp as truth.
Years went by and old age neared,
The fleeting dream steed disappeared.

Sleek on the broad steppe now there rove
The mettled steeds of the kolkhoz drove.
Even nags like mine on this new earth
Into good horses have rebirth.

Stalin himself heard the Kazakh bard.
For his songs he sent him this reward:
A steed of matchless form and pace,
Only bold dreamers dream such grace.

His step is like a well rhymed song.
His neck, like a swan's, is slender, long.
Diamond rays from his eyes flash bright,
Aye, and his shining mane gives light.

In rich new raiment glad I go,
My robe with patterns all aglow,
And my Red Banner Order there
Where all may see it, proud I wear.

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

Gay self, gay song to each aoul
Well horsed now brings the bard Jamboul,
Who lives in Stalin's great red Spring,
Now dreams fulfilled the bard can sing.

The vale they fill,
They wreath the hill,
The gardens with their fragrance spill.
The gorgeous flowers of our land
Perfume the wind, inlay the strand.

I sing of him who spreads truth's power
Over the world from Kremlin tower;
Whose world-warming heart sent me a ray,
Gave me my youth, my steed, my day.

[I. S.]

A DECADE OF SOVIET POETRY

LEONID ZNAKOMY AND DAN LEVIN

SOVIET poetry of the past decade has been part of a distinct period in Russian history and literature since the revolution—the period of reconstruction.

This is the third main period in Russian literature since 1917. It follows the periods usually known as that of the Revolution and Civil War, and that of the Economic Restoration (or the NEP period).

The first extended from 1917 to 1922. The revolution caused a disintegration of literary forms and traditions, and the rise of new schools: the Futurists, whose leader was the dynamic and versatile poet Vladimir Mayakovsky; the cosmic or “messianic” school; and a small group of proletarian poets that clustered around Demyan Bedny. Of the older, pre-revolutionary figures, the only important ones who accepted the revolution and whose influence was vital were Valerian Bryusov and Alexander Blok.

The economic restoration began with the end of civil war in 1922. Russia lay exhausted. Hatreds and memories of battle still burning like raw wounds, the young men and women, poets among them, suddenly faced a new age, signaled by the “New Economic Policy” (NEP), formulated by Lenin. There was a terrific let-down from heights of action, a need to make the difficult adjustment to a peacetime society, and above all a need to rebuild and then build further—cities, dams, collectives, literacy. This profound change was faithfully mirrored in much of the literature of the next six years. Poetry saw the rise of many new schools, among them that marshalled by the magazine LEF (Left Front of Art); the Constructivists (who opposed the futurists and wanted a return to rhythmic verse); the brief glow of the Imagists whose foremost figure was the flaxen-haired peasant

Sergei Essenin (this school reflected the uprooted bewilderment of the Russian peasant, and the spread of bohemianism). Gradually there emerged from this period a new realism with which was blended some of the romanticism of the civil war years. These qualities became characteristic of the poetry of the reconstruction period, which may be said to have begun about 1928 or 1929.

Fountainhead of this later tide in Soviet poetry was Edouard Bagritzky. The "romantic realism" of Bagritzky and his contemporaries of the Thirties led to the "lyric revival" which is still in progress.

With the spread of the new world war, Soviet poetry has shown signs of moving in a more complex direction. The mental and emotional life of its writers cannot but be already deeply affected by the widening tragedy. Echoes of the Finnish war, of the destruction of Poland, of London in flames, are heard in the poetry of the past three years.

Nevertheless, the major trend is lyric, within the limits of realism. There is no movement even vaguely resembling Surrealism. Symbolism has never revived—it was one of the casualties of the revolution. Realism is the touchstone.

On the formal side, the "lyric revival" has meant the return to favor of the four line lyric and other simple forms, as against the more intricate verse of the Futurists. This period has also been marked by a wholesale passage of folk ballads and other popular poetry into literary writing. Village doggerels, called *chastushki*, are interpolated into more literary works; their swing and diction have colored the writing of some of the young poets. Bagritzky went to the Ukrainian folk rhythms (made famous by the nineteenth century Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko in his ballad *Gaidamaki*) for some of his best poems. The old epic ballads and fairy tales have been combed for themes and rhythms. Songs for mass singing on a fairly high level have been produced by Alexander Prokofiev and others who devote their talent to writing Red Army marches; and the songs taught children in

school and sung widely throughout the country are written by ranking poets.

The horizon of Soviet poetry has widened in the past decade. The Futurists of the Twenties were inclined to sneer at all values but their own. They had overthrown the old bourgeois culture and its values. Pushkin was bourgeois. The literature of Greece and Rome were slave literatures—out with them! And so on. The poets of the Thirties came to realize that they had much to learn from the past and from the poets of other nations in their own time. Today, Pushkin is again the great model for Russian poets. Kipling, whose fluency and vigor appeal to the Russian-trained ear, is widely translated. Several of Shakespeare's plays have been done into Russian, including *Hamlet*, translated by the first-rate poet Boris Pasternak.

A constant stream of translations into Russian from poetry in the minority languages—Ukrainian, Tadjik, Kalmuk, Jewish, Armenian, Lettish, Esthonian—is also being turned out. The eightieth anniversary of the death of the Ukrainian poet Shevchenko was celebrated, by government decree, throughout Soviet Russia. This is part of the policy of developing and consolidating the loyalty of nationality groups. Some strange vanguard techniques have been fostered in this effort. For instance, a long poem "by the Kalmuk people to their older brother the great Russian people," written in collaboration by the four foremost Kalmuk poets and translated by a Russian poet. Or take a poem "by the Uzbek people," done in collaboration by ten poets, relating the history, struggles, and hopes of the Uzbeks.

The sweet and gaudy peasant poetry of old Russia is dead. Its foundations were the old religion, the old individual closeness to the earth, the old sorrows of bondage. Sergei Essenin, who killed himself in 1928, was the last link between the old peasant poetry and the new Russian life. There has been little until recently to take the place of this beautiful lyric writing. A raw but verveful poetry has flowered, however, relating the emotional change from country to city.

A serious attempt has been made to revamp the psychology of the whole Russian people. Poetry and song have been one of the "propaganda" instruments used. The *chastushki* of the collective farms throw emphasis on a happy life, learning, play, communal activities. The old "Volga Boatman" song found a rival, expressly written by a ranking poet, relating happy days along the Volga and closing with the grand opening of the Moscow-Volga canal. These efforts have often been crude, although basically healthy.

Finally, a real effort has been made to weave the writers of poetry into the social fabric. The state rewards them well. And there is a popular market. Bagritzky's *Revery about Opanas*, a medium-length ballad about the Civil War, sold 1,250,000 copies. Editions of 10,000 and 20,000 are common. Collections of poetry are printed cheaply, and sold cheaply. There are hundreds of poets; many are distinguished more by proletarian zeal than by quality; others are equal to ranking western poets.

Of the poets included in these translations, Edouard Bagritzky is generally held to be the foremost. A disciple of Pushkin, a classicist, and a student of western literature, Bagritzky brought new and stable values into Soviet poetry. These were the values of a pure poetry, instead of a poetry of propaganda. He became the first Soviet poet who completely freed himself from sloganeering, and he laid the foundation for what was to become the school of "romantic realism." His poetry has a darkness and nostalgia that carry great emotional force. *Ustina* is set to the old ballad measure of Ukrainian folksong: Bagritzky used this rhythm in some of his best writing; its high gaiety throws into blacker contrast the grim narrative of the poem. *Black Bread*, one of the most significant of modern Russian poems, is the expression of the disenchantment of a generation that had to make the transition to peace and prosaic life after the terrible splendour of revolution and civil war.

Bagritzky died in 1934, at the age of thirty-eight.

Iosif Outkin is usually conceded a "guitar player," a strum-

mer of light lyrics. *The Shepherd*, however, is his approach to a sombre and characteristic theme of the civil war, the heroism and death of a simple Red partisan.

Alexander Zharov, although still in his thirties, has been an influential and admired poet for fifteen years. His usual medium is the irregularly rhymed lyric. He, with Alexander Bezimensky and Utkin, led the break from the Cosmists (or Messianists—who sang the revolution exclusively in cosmic terms) to follow Mayakovsky and Nikolai Aseyev and turn Soviet poetry toward social realism. The story of his *Letter* is the change from country to city—a characteristic theme of the reconstruction. *Our Songs* deals with another problem that has troubled Soviet poets—the nature of the “new individual” whom the socialist revolution was to create. Zharov is a lyric publicist, who popularizes in facile and often striking verse the themes of the day.

Nikolai Aseyev is the foremost follower of Mayakovsky, and is one of the major poets. In 1941 Aseyev received the 100,000 ruble government award as the outstanding Soviet poet, for poetic activity since the revolution.

Nikolai Brown is a lyric poet, sentimental, sensitive, and musical. He publishes little, but that little is of finished quality.

Mikhail Svetlov became famous in 1925 with the publication of *Poems About a Rabbi* and *Granada*. In the former he treats with tenderness and imagination the problem of the link between past and present. Svetlov is primarily a sentimental romanticist. In recent years he has been experimenting with dramas of mixed poetry and prose.

Stepan Schepachov is one of the younger poets, considered by some critics the outstanding lyricist. Vissarion Saianov, in his emphasis on word exactness and beauty of phrase, represents a trend toward a new imagism in Soviet poetry, recalling Amy Lowell and her British and American contemporaries. Alexander Surkov is another of the good younger poets. His piece translated in this group pictures a ruined village after the Nazi blitzkrieg. Vasili Lebedev-Kumach is the Soviet Union's veteran

"poet laureate," whose official prestige and function are similar to John Masefield's. He is not one of the best, but probably the most facile and popular poet-writer of many Red Army songs, patriotic and stirring.

Alexander Tvardovsky has come to fame suddenly, with the publication of two thin books, *Land of Young Grass-Shoots* in 1937 and *Village Chronicle* in 1940. He is the foremost of the young poets who have returned for their themes to the new peasant life.

He has been compared to Nekrasov, one of the pantheon of Russian poets of the nineteenth century.

Land of Young Grass-Shoots is a long narrative ballad in folk style, shot with folk humor and imagery. It argues the case for the Soviet ideal of collective social life instead of the strictly individual existence. It is the odyssey of a peasant, Nikita Morgunok, who is dissatisfied with life on a collective farm and sets out in search of the *Land of Young Grass-Shoots*, an individualist's utopia, where you can "go where you like and spit where you like." He crosses Russia and finally begins to see there is no such place. The poem ends with his talk with an old "grandad" who advises him to return to the collective. This last section is translated in prose.

The selection of the translations included is not an attempt to cover the field. Representative poems by some of the important poets, none of them known generally among American readers and writers, have been chosen. There are many other good poets: Alexander Bezimensky is a ranking Soviet poet, a man who has done more to develop the vocabulary of the language than any modern Russian poet except Mayakovsky. Nikolai Tikhonov, one of the older poets, became famous for splendid civil war ballads in the spirit of romantic heroism, and has written excellent lyrics. Nikolai Zabolotsky is a strange younger poet of unusual though as yet unorganized power. Boris Pasternak, like Bagritzky a westerner by orientation, is the most perfect and classic Russian poet, removed from the general stream of Soviet poetry. Of

similar quality is Osip Mandelstam. Ilja Selvinsky is the leader of the important Constructivist school.

Finally, beyond the field of Soviet poetry is a cluster of emigré poets—most of whom lived in Paris until the fall of France. Famed in this group are the names of Andrei Biely, Ivan Bunin, Vladislav Khodasevitch, Boris Poplavsky, Iuri Mandelstam. Bunin and Mandelstam are still alive. Some of the talented younger members of the emigré circle are now in America.

Fed by other impulses, writing from behind a veil of rootlessness and metaphysical thought, these emigrés are a literature in themselves, little related to the youthful, raw and positive poetry of the Soviet Union.

A smaller group of Russian poets living outside of the Soviet Union have written nevertheless in a spirit like that of the Soviet poets. Prominent among them are David Burliuk (a co-founder, with Mayakovsky, of Russian futurism and now a well known New York artist), Nikolai Seoyev, and Boris Stashev.

Most of the Soviet poets represented in this collection are still young men. Many of them are now fighting in defense of their motherland, probably some have died in battle. Today the future of Russian poetry, as of the poetry of the rest of the world, rests in the hands of the Red armies, navy, and air fleet. The bloody civil war flowered into a poetic renaissance in the twenties and thirties. Perhaps, when the invader has been destroyed, the brutality and heroism of today will also be translated into strong and beautiful verse.

TRANSLATIONS BY DAN LEVIN

O X A N A

NIKOLAI ASEYEV

IT was not because of the blandness or firmness
Of your young and golden hair
That my heart suddenly one day broke cleanly
With all other hearts.

I remember you, clearly and strongly,
You as you were when years ago,
Without hesitation or trepidation,
You looked deep into my eyes.

I love you, the very same you—
More tenderly and more closely,
The same you that I called Oxana,
When you blew with the wind in spring.

You that walked beside me and suffered,
Walked and rejoiced in the days,
In those years when the southwind blew
Its weight of snows on our shoulders.

In that land where, seeing a dove,
A song would slip from your lips and fly,
Where it was useless to love without remembrance
And useless to sing of love.

Where spring would give itself the gate—
Tired of sorrow and moping,
Wanting to lie down under a plane tree,
Near a clump of willows.

No, it is not the blandness or firmness
Of your young and golden hair,
It is you yourself who have ordered
My poems to sound.

[D. L.]

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

GREAT-HEADED BOY

NIKOLAI ASEYEV

The goldfinch whistles:
Great-headed boy,
Get up, pull your arms
Through your silk blouse.

Stand here and wait:
The morning is blue and wild,
The boundaries of all the worlds
Flow together here and guard you.

The morning is blue and quiet,
The sun is a wet carnation,
The sky is full of brightness,
The Seim's waters are shining.

White steam from the meadows
Falls on the birches;
Shaking the yellow flowers
Bees hum in the acacias.

Great-headed boy,
A lilac cloud floats,
The world is still in shadow,
All wrapped in the flames of birth.

Don't go beyond this
Sea of rain and light.
Listen: the cabbage heads
Whisper: forget everything!

The goldfinch sings:
Great-headed boy,

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

Get up, pull your arms
Through your silk blouse!

With flaming manes
Five suns play at once,
Happiness stands a hundredfold,
Blow it away—it will not return!

Whether in silk or calico,
Stand here, soak in the warmth.
Swimming in blue fire rays
Drops of dew sparkle.

Don't go beyond this
Sea of rain and light.
Stay here, taking in
Your willow happiness.

[D. L.]

SONG OF USTINA

EDOUARD BAGRITZKY

Oi, in a raspberry bush
A berry dropped its leaves;
Oi, in Galicia young Ustina
Bore a little son.

She bore him in secret,
She hid him in the rushes,
There where the sweeper-wind
Hurtles the steppe mounds.

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

Where the sweeper-wind whistles
Past the barn standing empty,
Bitterly Ustina cried
Over her cossack-son.

Bitterly she cried and sobbed,
Bound him in spun linen,
Hugged him and kissed him,
Drowned him in the river . . .

Float away, young girl's sorrow,
Through night, through bad weather,
Into a cherry-colored morning
And clear shining water.

With a towel I'll draw tight
My young breasts, so none
Will know that I am filled
With a mother's strength.

On the Danube the wind trumpets
Over dark blue water!
While the little sonlet floats
Midstream on the Danube.

Crows shout hoarsely over him,
With their black wings brushing,
While with fins like plumes asway
Schools of carp play round him . . .

On the Danube the wind trumpets,
Bending back the oak trees,
A stump rusts in the lagoon,
Creaking in the Danube.

Ustina sits beneath the cliff,
Singing, and crying.
Into the lagoon a fresh wind
Blows her little sonlet.

Float away, my son, till caught
In a berry bramble.
Come out, miller, to the raft,
See my little sonlet.

A hunter rambling by the bank,
Breaking lagoon-rushes
Looks:
Is that a swan or flotsam,
Floating on the Danube?

Beat the clamoring tongued rods
Against the metal kettle;
Come and gather round, you girls,
All around the plane-tree!

Underneath the green plane-tree
On a bench of oak-wood
Lies a dead unchristened fellow
Covered with new linen.

On the steppe the clangor's heard,
Rightward, and leftward,
Answering the sound, Ustina
Walked toward the plane-tree.

Ustina stumbled forward
With her head uncovered
Through the young rows of rye
To look upon her son . . .

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

As a girl I have learned grief,
As a girl I'll perish.
Hair ungathered I will go,
Won't throw on a kerchief.

I'll go with my hair ungathered
Under the green plane-tree.
Stand, my love, upon my left—
Stand, death, upon my right!

Over paths and over slopes
The bob-whites quarrel.
Hair ungathered came Ustina
Underneath the plane-tree.

Over the linen she bent,
Drew it back with her hand;
Soaking through her shirt,
Her thick milk ran.

Bent over her tiny child,
The mother howled like a bitch,
Tore the towel apart
And bared her swollen breasts.

Rip, stout linen towel,
Tear into shreds and clots,
Fall, fall thick milk
Onto the dead eyes.

Bulged with milk the breasts,
Breasts, sate your yearning . . .
I killed him, kind people—
Take me, come bind me! . . .

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

Hey, noise your leaves, green plane—
Tree for lovers deft,
Hey, Danube
 on the right—
And sonlet—
 on the left!

Hey, noise, ageold plane
Your chattersome leaves!
They led her to the right,
Hurled her from the cliff...

On the Danube the wind trumpets
Bending back the oak trees.
A stump rusts in the lagoon,
Creaking in the Danube.

Hey, Danube, big river,
With your waves dark blue—
Midstream there's Ustina
Floating on the Danube!

Crows shout hoarsely over her
With their black wings brushing,
While in shoals with plumes asway
Carp play round and round her.

BLACK BREAD

EDOUARD BAGRITZKY

Black bread and a loving wife
With sameness and pallor envenom our life . . .
The years that were nourished on hoof-beat and stone,

The rivers by deathless floodwaters blown,
 And wormwood that burned on our lips . . .
 The knife is too tame for us
 The pen not to our temper
 Pick and shovel too humble
 And glory no longer glorious:
 We are rusted leaves
 On the rusted oaks . . .
 Come first wind,
 Come first cold—
 And we fly away.
 For whose path are we laying a carpet?
 Whose feet will walk over our sereness?
 Will the young trumpeter crunch over us?
 Will strange constellations rise over us?
 We are the rusted oaks' spent restfulness . . .
 Our homeless shivering blows restfulness away . . .
 Into the night we fly astray!
 Into the night we fly astray!
 Like ripened stars, flying we know not where . . .
 Over us the young trumpeters peal,
 Over us strange constellations wheel,
 Over us strange banners crack in the air . . .
 Come first wind,
 Come first cold—
 We break loose after them,
 We fly after them,
 We whirl after them,
 We roll over meads,
 We sing on the steppes!
 Following the bayonet's gleam in the flying cloud,
 Following the beat of the hoof in the dreamy fen,
 Following the song of the trumpet, winding through the
 wood . . . [D. L.]

THE GIFT

NIKOLAI BROWN

Among the dusty, outlived old
Songs and verse of gentle hour,
Sewed to a sheet of poems I came
Across a blue and withered flower.

And it was all as from the first,
I looked and suddenly again
I saw you, full of sadness, seek
This flower far across the plain.

How you wandered, how you sought,
How you plucked it and instead
Of forgetting, how you sewed it
To this poor verse with white thread.

How you spread your arms and wanted
With your heart to overleap
All the miles of separation
Over which our letters creep . . .

How you flung the window open
When the morning rose in flame,
While the early wind blew, calling,
Calling, calling me by name;

Calling, calling me by name;
Calling from a full throat, "Stand
Here beside me," calling, "Come,
Let us stand here, hand in hand."

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

But like thieves across the heavens
Ran the sun's low striking rays,
And in loneliness our letters
Travelled over distant ways . . .

I look . . . until the selfsame fire
Burns my poor heart, overpowers
Me, and your distant gift
Blossoms with a hundred flowers.

[D. L.]

COMRADE, DO NOT FORGET!

VASILY LEBEDEV-KUMACH

Comrade, do not forget: We're girt about by foes.
We have avoided war this long
Only because we are eternally on guard—remember—
And because we're strong!

Here rolls the widening blood-tide of Fascism,
Here's liberty in chains—and all round bestial mirth.
Here's only one land—that of socialism—
An adamant rock—defending earth.

Spain lies in blood. Around her throat
Clenched in a death grip see the Fascist claws.
China's in flame—no time for rest—
The cannon growl—there fly the carrion crows!
Beyond the hills a blood-horizon blazes,
And even newsprint sings the bullet song.
Foes form a ring like wolves upon our borders.
Brave comrades, are you ready for their throng?

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

The Commune and Fascism, liberty and oppression,
Can never live together in this life!
Then rise, our strength—and grow, our wings—
For victory, when it is time for strife!

Comrade, do not forget: We're girt about by foes.
We have avoided war this long
Only because we are eternally on guard—remember—
And because we're strong!

1937

[D. L.]

THE SHEPHERD

IOSIF OUTKIN

By the river, by the bridge
Three of beech, and three of birch.

In the village, a cock crows.
Shepherd sits where river flows.

By the river, by the bridge,
Cossacks ride across the ridge.

Heard the cock,
Saw the shepherd.
Captain (drunk):
"Any reds in your burg?"

Bright-haired shepherd breaks a switch,
Shakes his head and rubs an itch.

But the drunken cossacks shout:
"Let's go see!" They wheel about—

In the village moos the calf,
Here and there the farm-girls laugh,
While the shepherd p.d.q.
Runs past to staff hdq.

"Machine guns, comrades! Beat the drum!"
Hell for leather, the cossacks come.

Without stopping they count a hundred,
Back to the river the remnants thunder.

Back by bridge or beaten track
... While the shepherd too swims back.

Dripping he climbs up the ledge
... And there's the cossacks, at the bridge.

Saw him: "Hey there! Where from, lad?"
"Better tell, or it'll go bad..."

Shepherd: "I just took a swim,
Saw a muskrat, dived for him."

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

"A muskrat, hey? Dived for his pelt?
Son of a bitch! Take off that belt!"

By the river, by the bridge,
Three of beech and three of birch.

In the village, a cock crows.
Shepherd hangs where river flows.

[D. L.]

NATIVE LAND

STEPAN SCHEPACHOV

More than once, more than twice, you met the foe
And each time returned triumphant
The carrion vultures fly beyond the clouds
And you, my land, have cared for them and fed them.

I have seen you fearless in the eyes of warriors
When dire events moved upon you.
I look into the face of Stalin, my countryman.
In him I read your will and your courage.

O native land, again you are mad and grim
The people's might boiling up in you.
More than once, more than twice, you have met the foe
And each time returned triumphant.

[D. L.]

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

SNOWDROP

STEPAN SCHEPACHOV

Past four, but I cannot sleep,
The blind gale howls. Night wings toward morning.
The earth, wound up, goes whirring . . .
A hundred years will pass, ten thousand turning,
And the distant age (on which we muse)
Will in good time blow the gale's trumpet.
In that far age, beyond mind's yearning,
I wish I could be but a snowdrop.
To fly over the earth along the wind.
To stop and, glancing, future life peruse.
To flutter like a feather about the poplar's crown,
Then on a child's cheek settle down, to melt away.

[D. L.]

DESPAIR

ALEXANDER SURKOV

So day and day, year after year . . .
Breast on fire. Throat dry.
And again the black old hag
Twists her mocking puckered mouth.
What deathly weariness . . .
Strength at last ebb?
What lies behind? And what's ahead?
Dark, as a pit. Close. Dumb.
Blood jells, and I can hear
The caught fly fighting in the web.
Stand, damn you, wait!

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

My whole heart still is not compressed
Into a soldier's leaden fate.
I want to live! Away, old hag!
I want to sing! Let go, I say! . . .
Break the glass. The brandy spills.
And song grows outward in my breast.
To you, Ukraine, dear native land,
A son's song bursts across the miles.

[D. L.]

IN POLAND

ALEXANDER SURKOV

Here was a bitter burning without bottom,
The squire reduced unhappily to alms,
Where stood the stone Polish madonnas
Each with her suckling infant in her arms.

They stared into the drear forsaken village
Where after drought the crumpled plaster peels.
They were the only solitary mothers there
Whose eyes grief did not cloud with tears.

[D. L.]

SOVIET CO-ED

MIKHAIL SVETLOV

The drum's dull thump
Awakes the morning fogs.
Joan of Arc rides
To save besieged Orleans.

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

The love-clink of cups
Is drowned in a minuet,
As Trianon celebrates the last
Day of Marie Antoinette.

Twenty-five watts burn
In the small desk lamp.
You hunch, like a dear sister,
Over a scribbled-in pad.

The loud bell's beat
Begins the holy work—
Joan of Arc gives the pyre
Her young lithe body.

The executioner is calm
(Human blood is always red).
The guillotine's exulting knife
Seeks the throat of Marie Antoinette.

The night retires behind stars,
But you are untiring. Book
Closed, pages all turned.
You are ready for the exam.

Lie down, draw up the covers, sleep comes.
Do not ponder another minute.
See: the stars, descending from high,
Mutely go each to his home.

A wind opens the shutter,
Without touching the rest of the house,
Wanting to learn only
Your inmost thoughts.

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

Our girls, rifle straps drawn
Over belted soldier-coats,
Fell singing under the knife,
Burned on the high pyres.

The bells beat as loud,
Hushing the dull drum.
In each brotherhood of long graves
A Joan of our own is buried.

Sleep calls in a soft voice.
You have answered, you sleep.
Your grey dress is silent
On the back of a chair.

[D. L.]

FROM POEMS ABOUT A RABBI

MIKHAIL SVETLOV

Much thinking is in the face of the old rabbi,
And each wrinkle stands for many years,
Paradise awaits him in the high heaven,
The dusty cheder awaits him here on earth.

Far in the world revolution
Ekaterinoslav is lost,
Down its crooked streets
The revolution has whirled the rabbi,

Between earth and heaven
Spinning the maddened days,
Rolling over the rabbi's head
A new wave of white.

So be it. So it was willed.
 (Man is not in his own hands) . . .
 The dry cracks of the thin lips
 Are sealed in permanent silence.

Spread at his feet
 Are the debris of the uprooted days,
 And wandering on the edge of new roads
 Goes the rabbi in his old skull-cap.

* * * *

Autumn gathers the leaves in clumps,
 Whirls them, whirls them one by one . . .
 I remember: of purgatory and paradise
 The withered Talmud spoke.

The old rabbi talked of peace,
 His aged face so familiar that I felt pain . . .
 And now my rabbi deals
 In fresh tobacco at the market.

The old rabbi will not leave his shrine . . .
 While at my anxious warlike post
 I hear the thunder of heavy verse
 Under convoy of angry clouds.

Quietly the sad synagogue listens
 To the marching on the road of October,
 Sighing with its silenced god,
 Grown old, it is tired of words.

I know that my father is fervently praying
 Forgiveness for the sins of his son,
 While I melt the comsomol's ringing cries
 Down into leaden verses.

[D. L.]

A LETTER

ALEXANDER ZHAROV

You write:

"The wind with warm hands
Here in our fields gathers the wheat."
But I observe
How the pavement stones
Blossom
When the rain has passed.

I am enchanted at
How swiftly the puddles vanish
And the frightened rivulets hide . . .
Neither rainbow nor rain is alien to us,
Nor sunrise nor sunset nor wildwood,
Nor nightingale.

I remember, I remember
How their voices rang.
But here, mornings, filling the skies,
The wonderful throbbing
Of propellers
Braces me and brings me joy.

Yes, I know:
Forests grow beautifully.
But here I go mad
With rejoicing
When I see
How richly and proudly
On our streets
Grow the houses.

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

Today I seem
To see more facets,
And more light in them.
Is this not because in my hip pocket
Is your letter
And in it—your love?

Today again
In sunlight are drowned
Homes, boulevards, people, horizons . . .
My friend,
I am in love with life—and is this not
Because I am inseverably
In love with you? . . .

[D. L.]

OUR SONGS

ALEXANDER ZHAROV

True, our songs are often mediocre,
They are only full of wine and sun . . .
And, perhaps, they are not destined
As songs of an epoch to live on.

It will not be theirs in the coming age,
I know, to rouse the beating heart;
Of their topic, the new man,
They have little to impart.

We caught the sound, we caught the smell,
As the years leaped and the days ran . . .
But somehow, beyond that, the trouble
Lies in the very words—new man.

SOVIET RUSSIAN POETRY

In his walk we hear determination.
But the whisper of his heart escapes our ears.
Yes, I fear our songs are but a prelude
To the melody of the advancing years.

So let us sing. Not mope or sigh!
Pour out our happiness' wine.
The destiny of building
Not only songs but an epoch
Is yours and mine!

[D. L.]

TRANSLATIONS BY BABETTE DEUTSCH

R U P T U R E (I X)

BORIS PASTERNAK

THE piano, aquiver, will lick the foam from its lips.
The frenzy will wrench you, fell you, and you, undone,
Will whisper: "Darling!" "No," I shall cry, "what's this?
In the presence of music!" But nearness there is none

Like twilight's, with the chords tossed into the fireplace
Like fluttering diaries, one year, and two, and three.
O magic remembrancer! Beckon, beckon: you may
Well be astonished! For—look—you are free.

I do not hold you. Go, yes, go elsewhere,
Serve others. *Werther* cannot be written again,
And in our times death's odor is in the air:
To open a window is to open a vein.

1918

[B. D.]

S P R I N G

BORIS PASTERNAK

I've come from the street, Spring, where the poplar stands
Amazed, where distance quails, and the house fears it will swoon
Where the air is blue, like the bundle of wash in the hands
Of the convalescent leaving the hospital soon;

Where evening is empty: a tale begun by a star
And interrupted, to the confusion of rank
On rank of clamorous eyes, waiting for what they are
Never to know, their bottomless gaze blank.

1918

[B. D.]

“FIRE, THE ROPE, THE BULLET,
AND THE AXE”

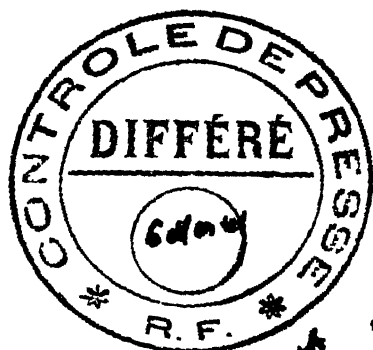
NIKOLAI TIKHONOV

Fire, the rope, the bullet, and the axe,
Like servants bowed and followed where we went,
And in each drop that fell a deluge slept,
Pebbles grew into mountains where they lay,
And in a small twig trodden underfoot
Whole forests rustled, their black arms outspread.

At table, falsehood ate and drank with us,
Bells tolled out of mere habit stupidly,
Our coins lost weight and rang a thinner chime,
And children looked on corpses without fear.
Those were the days when first it was we learned
Words bitter, beautiful and harsh.

1921

[B. D.]



FATA MORGANA

ANDRÉ BRETON

Illustrated by Wifredo Lam

Translated by Clark Mills



[The stamp of the French censorship (February 1941) reproduced above bears the word DIFFÉRÉ and under an illegible signature is the handwritten inscription "deferred till the final conclusion of peace."]

To Jacqueline

THIS morning the daughter of the mountain holds on her knees
an accordion of white bats
A day a new day that makes me think of an object I am keeping
Lined in a frame glass tubes transparent all the colors of philtres
and liqueurs
If before charming me he had to fulfill some requirement of
commercial display it matters little
For me no work of art is worth this little square of variegated
glass as far as one can see life
A day a new love and I pity those for whom love loses in not
changing countenance
As if from the lightless pond the carp that offers me awakening
a lock of your hair
Were no older than a hundred years and did not silence for me
all that to remain myself I should not know
A new day is it beside you I have slept
I slept then then I have put on the gloves of moss
In the corner I begin to see the glitter of the wretched chest of
drawers named yesterday

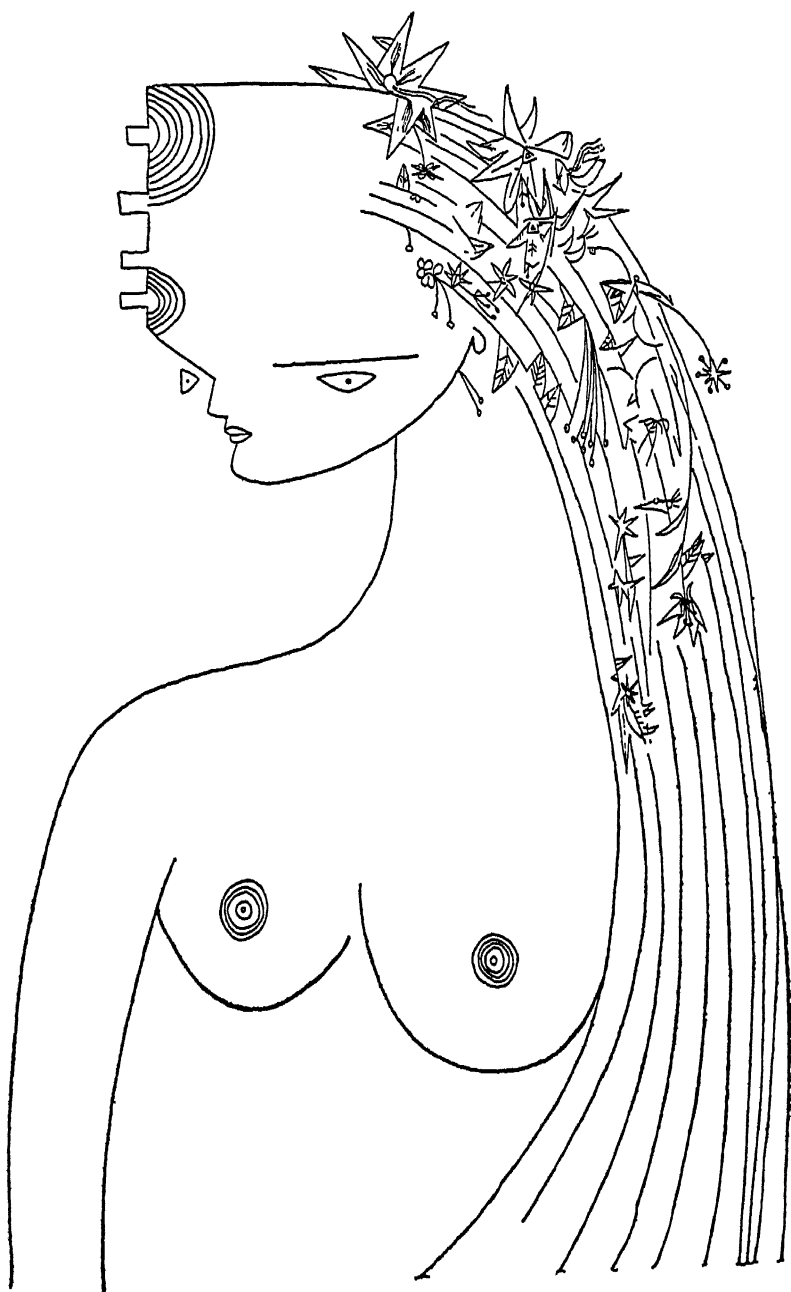
There are such embarrassing pieces that serve to conceal the
 passages
 From the other side who knows the magnetic barge we might
 leave together
 To meet the tree beneath the bark of which is told
 What we alone are one to the other in the vast algebra
 There is some furniture heavier than if filled with sand on the
 sea-bottom
 Against them we need word-levers
 Words escaped from old songs that go with the superb landscape
 of cranes
 Very late in the ports where bouquets of fever zigzag
 Listen

I see the sprite
 That you free with a fingernail
 Opening a package of cigarettes
 The harbinger fly that sows the salt of fashion
 So eager to persuade us all won't always exist
 He who exults in causing to be said Hello I no longer hear

How pretty what does that recall

If I were a city you say You would be Nineveh on the Tigris
 If I were an instrument of work Please black heaven You'd be the
 glass-blower's tube
 If I were a symbol You would be a fern in a basket
 And if I had a burden to carry That would be a ball of heads of
 ermines crying
 If I had to flee at night on a road That would be the wake of the
 geranium
 If I could see behind me without turning That would be the
 pride of the torpedo

How pretty



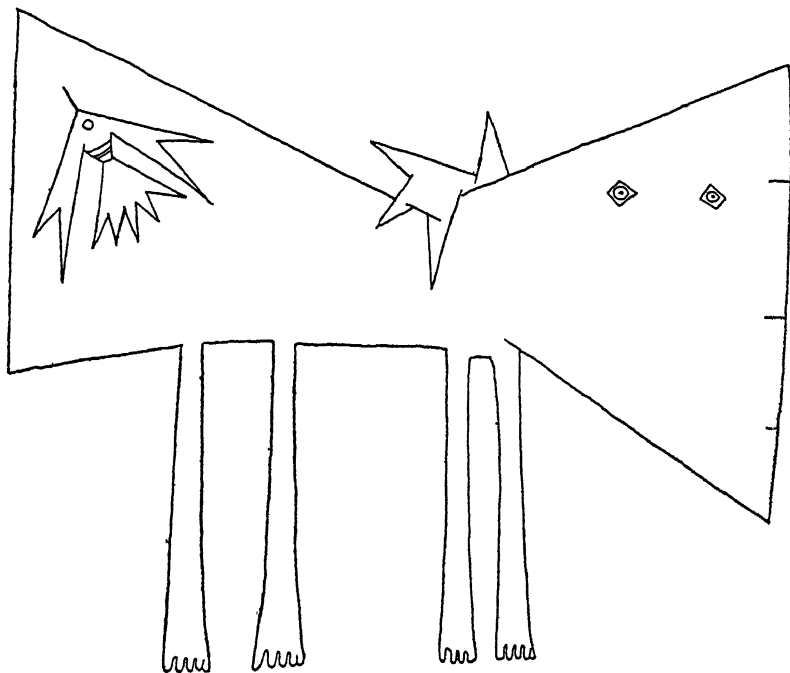
In no time at all
 It must be agreed that in a dream was seen the fading
 Of the sumptuous dresses of spangled tulle worn by the
 municipal sprinklers
 And even the last salesman of Armenian paper
 Close his shop under the glacial stare of Admiral Coligny
 In our time imagine an expedition forming for the cap-
 ture of the quetzal bird of which we possess but four
 examples alive yes alive
 That the roulette of the marchands de plaisir has turned to
 the blank

What does that recall

In the green plant hotels it is the hour when the hinges of in-
 numerable doors
 With a stroke of the bow prepare to separate like birds the best-
 matched shoes
 On the mordoré landings in the smashed waffle-iron where the
 bismuth crystallizes
 In the light of the vitrified castles of Mount Knock-Farril in the
 shire of Ross
 A day a new day that makes me think of an object kept by my
 friend Wolfgang Paalen
 In rope already gray the models of all the knots together on a
 board
 I do not know why it goes so far beyond the didactic care that
 presided at its construction probably for a naval school
 Although the ingenuity of man produces here its flower haloed
 by a cloud of little monkeys with thoughtful eyes
 Truly no page of any book even changing to black bread attains
 that magic virtue nothing is so propitious to me
 A new love and so much the worse if the others limit themselves
 to adoration
 The beast with scales of roses and sunken flanks whose vigilance
 I have duped for a long time

BRETON

I am beginning to see about me in the grotto
The lucid wind carries to me the lost perfume of existence
At last freed from its limits
At this depth now I hear only the ring of the skate
Whose flash liberates at times an entire perspective of mirrored
wardrobes fallen with their garments
Because you hold
In my being the place of a diamond mounted in a pane of glass
Which would relate to me minutely the rigging of the stars
Two hands that seek one another this is enough for the roof of
tomorrow
Two transparent hands yours the murex with which the ancients
drew my blood



But now the winged table-cloth
 Comes near still licked by the flame of great wines
 It swells the arches of air drinks at a gulp the lacunae of the
 leaves
 And plays at having itself caught sideways by the aqueduct
 That rolls wild pansies

The bubbles that rise to the surface of the coffee
 After the sugar the charming popular custom that they be
 scooped with the spoon
 These are so many strayed kisses
 Before they rush to crush themselves against the edges
 O whirlpool more cunning than the rose
 Whirlpool that carries away the mind that renews for me the
 childish illusion
 That all is there for reasons that concern me

What is written
 There is what is written on us and what we write

Where is the grill that would show that if its external outline

Is no longer juxtaposable with its internal outline
The bid passes

More within reach of man there are other coincidences
True torches in the night of sense
It was more than improbable it is thus on purpose
But people are so engaged in drowning themselves
That do not ask them to seize the outstretched hand

The bed rushes on its rails of blue honey
Liberating in transparency the animals of medieval sculpture
It slants ready to spill to the level of the slopes of digitalis
And shines intermittently with the eyes of the birds of prey
Charged with all that emanates from the plumed helmet of
Otranto

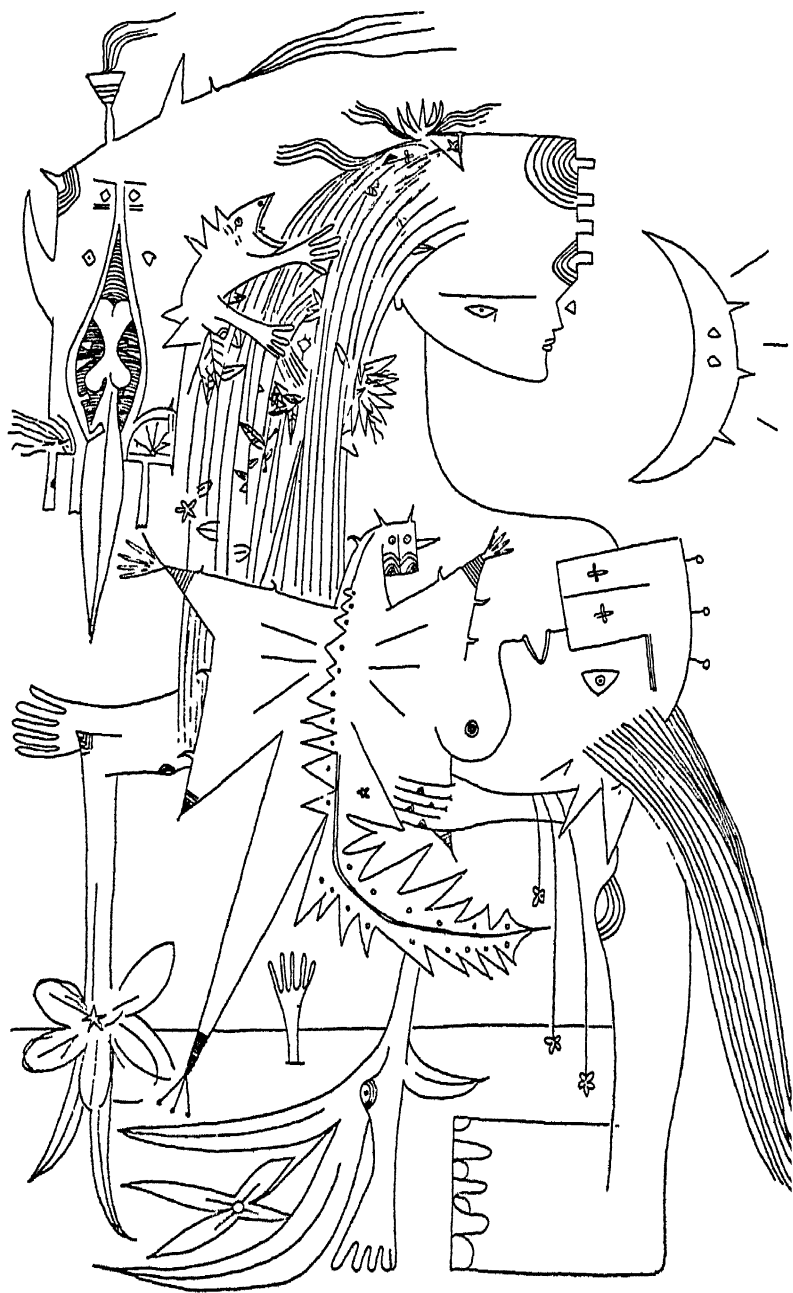
The bed rushes on its rails of blue honey
It vies in speed with the changing skies
Always in agreement ascension of the spikes of the park enclosures
And darkening more and more ceding to the rising of the dancers on the bar

The bed skips the signals it is one with all the bowls of goldfish
It vies in speed with the changing skies
Nothing in common you realize with the little railroad
That coils at Cordova in Mexico so that we may not tire of finding

The gardenias that shed scent in the hollowed shoots of palm-trees

Or elsewhere to permit us to choose
From the stepping stones among the lots of opal and raw turquoise

No the bed of mad thimblefuls does not restrict itself to unrolling
the silk of incomparable days and places



It is the loom where the cycles cross and from which gushes what
 is sensed as the music of the spheres
 The bed skips the signals it is one with all the bowls of goldfish
 And when whistling it investigates the carnal tunnel
 The walls withdraw the old blinding golden dust arises from the
 registers of citizenship
 And last all is retaken by the movement of the sea
 No the bed of mad thimblefuls does not restrict itself to unroll-
 ing the silk of incomparable days and places

It is the play without intermissions the curtain risen once and for
 all on the cascade

Tell me

How to protect oneself while travelling from the pernicious
 mental reservation
 That one does not go where one wishes
 The little fleeing place surrounded by trees that differ imper-
 ceptibly from all the others
 Exists that we may cross it at such an angle in the true life
 The stream in that very curl as in no other of all streams
 Is master of a secret it cannot make ours in haste
 Behind the window the latter weakly luminous between many
 others more or less luminous

What *happens*

Is of the utmost importance to us perhaps we should return
 Have the courage to ring
 Who says we would not be welcomed with open arms
 But nothing is verified all are afraid of ourselves
 Are almost also afraid
 And nevertheless I am sure that in the locked wood that turns at
 this moment against the glass
 Opens the only clearing
 Is that love that promise that goes past us
 That eternal round-trip ticket established on the model of the
 variegated moth

Is that love those fingers that press the husk of the mist
 So that from it may spring the unknown cities with the dazzling
 gates alas
 Love those telegraph wires that make of the insatiable light a
 jewel that endlessly reopens
 From the very cut of our compartment of the night
 You come to me from further than the shadow I do not say space
 of the millennial sequoias
 In your voice rises the ladder of the trills of lost birds

Beautiful loaded dice
 Happiness and unhappiness
 At the game of the card-sharper all those eyes wide open
 about an unfolded umbrella
 What revenge the santon-puce of the fortune teller
 My hand closes upon her
 If I fled my destiny

We must drive away the old blind man from the lichens of the
 church-wall
 Destroy down to the last the horrible little folios faded yellow
 green blue rose
 Ornamented with a variable bloodless flower
 Which he invites you to detach from his breast
 One by one for a few cents

But force remains always
 To the old tongue that samples the pot
 A head of hair that boils over
 And whatever one does never lapped at the heart of all light
 The flag of the pirates

*A tall man walking a dangerous road
 He was not satisfied with slipping under a workman's blue the
 steel-pointed arm-bands of a famous criminal*

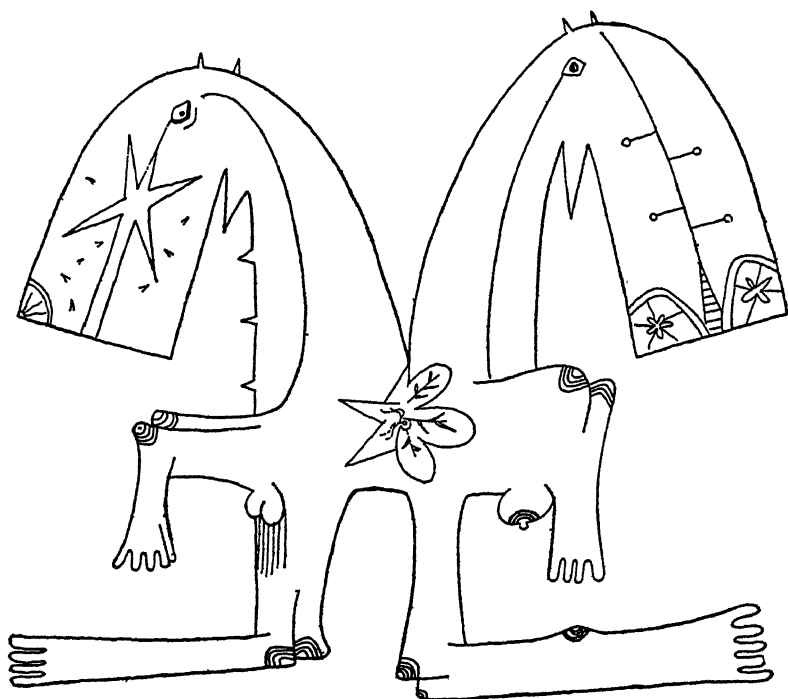
BRETON

*To his right the lion in his hand the bearskin
Turns towards the east
Where already with vapor and muffled sound the grouse inflates
the bilberries
There he tries to cross the torrent the stones which are gleams of
shoulders of women at the theatre
Pivot in vain quite slowly
I had lost him from sight he reappears a bit lower on the other
bank
He assures himself that he is still carrying the bearskin
To his right the lion très bien
The soil that he scarcely grazes crackles with the debris of scythes*

*At the same time that man descends precipitately a staircase at
the heart of a city he has discarded his armor
Outside they are fighting against what can last no longer
That man amidst so many others suddenly similar
What is he then how does he feel then more than himself
So that what cannot longer
last does not last
He is quite ready himself to last no longer
One for all come what may
Or life might be the drop of poison
Nonsense introduced into the song of the lark above the corn-
poppies*

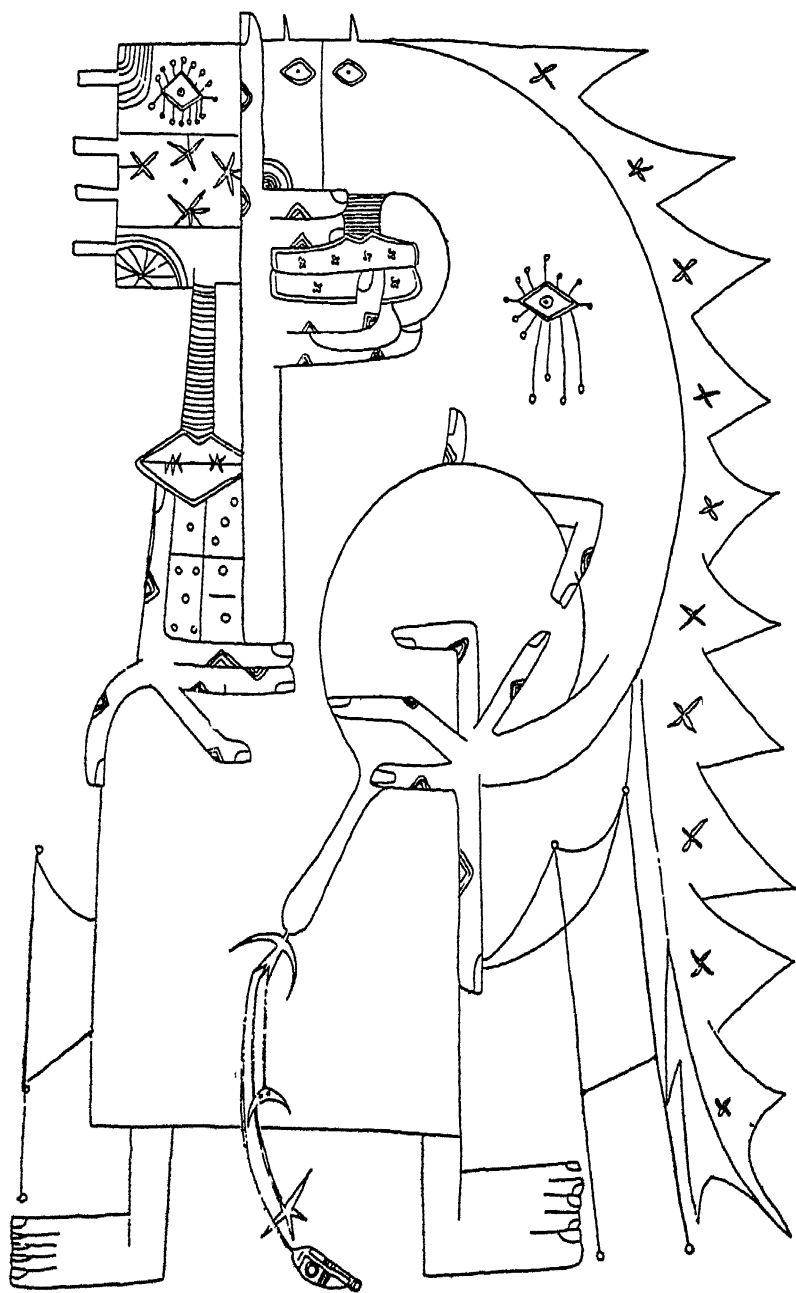
The squall passes
At the same time
That man who cleared the pigeonholes about the searchlight
Hesitates to return he lifts with precaution seaweed and seaweed
The wind has fallen so be it
And still more seaweed that he puts back
As if he had been forbidden to discover in its whole the most
secret young body of woman

*Whence rises a winged construction
 Here the weather is confused at the same time and brightens
 From the trapeze all of cicadas
 Mysteriously a very little girl asks
 André you do not know why I mignonette
 And at once a pyramid bounds into the distance
 For life or death what begins precedes me and finishes me
 A fine pierced pyramid of white stone
 Joined to that beautiful body with vermillion thongs*



From the brunette to the blonde
Between the thatch and the bed of black earth
There is room for a thousand and one crystal mirrors
Beneath which live again endlessly the heads that enchant
me
In the suspension of the consecration
Heads of women that follow one after another on your
shoulders in sleep
There are some so distant
Heads of men also
Innumerable to begin with those heads of emperors with
slippery beards
The market-gardener comes and goes beneath his saddle-
cloth
He embraces with a glance all the plateaus risen in the
night from the earth's center
Another day it is he and all these beings
Easily recognizable in the mists of the country
It is you it is I who grope behind the eternal disguise

In the lacework of history ibis mummy
 One step for nothing as one takes in the sails ibis mummy
 What leaves by the courtyard returns by the garden ibis mummy
 If the development of the child permits him to free himself from
 the phantasm of dismemberment of dislocation of the body
 ibis mummy
 It will never be too late to have done with the hacking of the soul
 ibis mummy
 And through you alone in all its facets of ibis mummy
 Ibis mummy of the non-choice through what reaches to me
 Ibis mummy desiring that all I know contribute to me without
 distinction
 Ibis mummy making me the tributary equal of evil and good
 Ibis mummy of fate drop by drop where homeopathy speaks its
 final word
 Ibis mummy of quantity changing in shadow to quality
 Ibis mummy of combustion leaving in all ashes a red point
 Ibis mummy of perfection calling the incessant fusion of all im-
 perfect creatures
 The ore of statues conceals from me only what is not the equally
 precious product of the seed of the gallows ibis mummy
 I am Nietzsche beginning to understand that he is both Victor-
 Emmanuel and two newspaper assassins Astu ibis mummy
 To myself alone I owe all that is written thought sung ibis
 mummy
 And without sharing all the women of the world I have loved
 ibis mummy
 With all that is no longer or waits to exist I find the lost unity ibis
 mummy
 I loved them to love you my unique love ibis mummy
 In the wind of the almanac whose leaves fly away ibis mummy
 In sight of this altar in the wood ibis mummy on the course of the
 orange-milk lactar

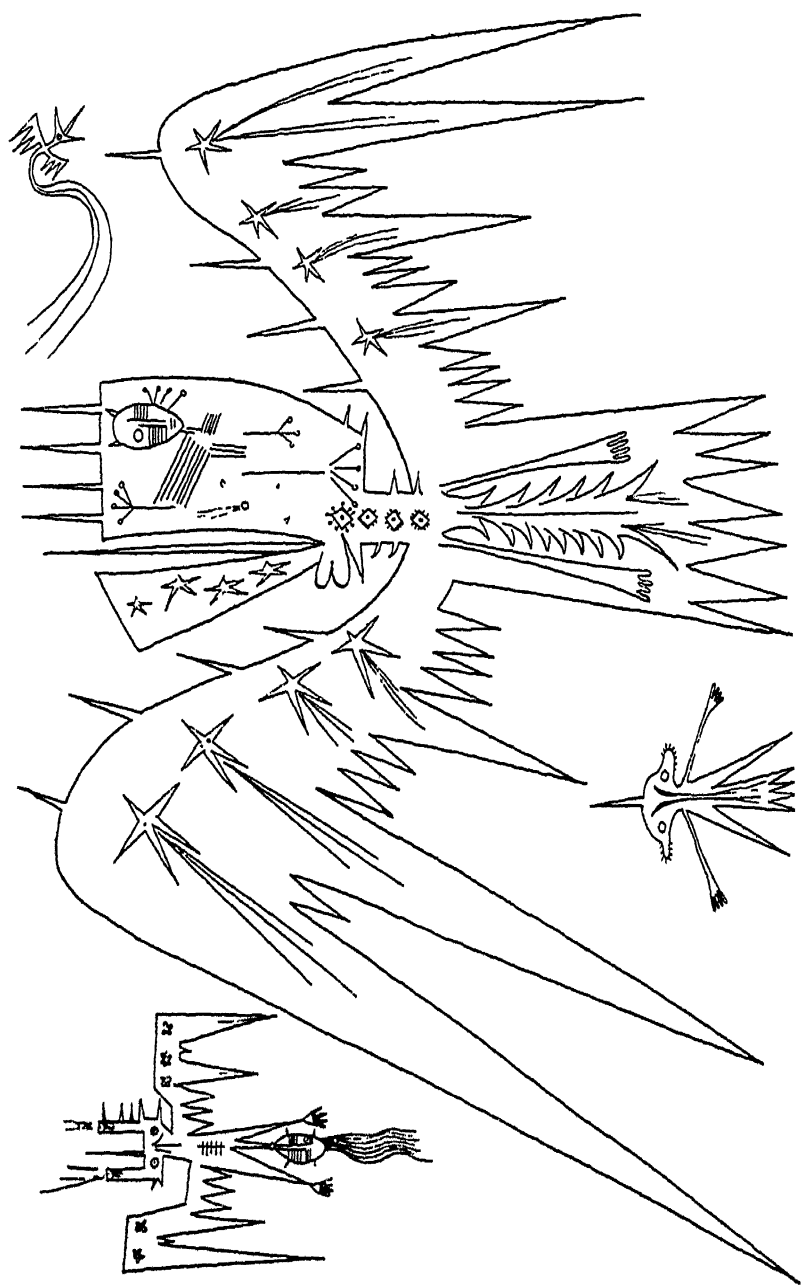


Whew the basilisk passed nearby without seeing me
 Let it return I have aimed the mirror at it
 Where is made to be consumed the indefeasible human
 thrill
 In a convulsion terminated by a splashing of gilded feathers
 We should punctuate here with sobs not only the attitudes
 of the bust
 But also the comings and goings of the head
 It is still more or less a problem in choreography
 Where I do not know either that a measure has been found
 for the out-of-control
 When the cup is precisely the lips
 In that acceleration in which defile
 Until the opposite is proven
 At the moment one drowns oneself the trivial events of life
 But the cabinets of antiques abound in the stones of Abraxas
 Three hundred and sixty-five times more vile than the solar
 day
 And the religious egg of the cock
 Continues to be hatched religiously by the toad

From the old balcony that hangs by but one rope of ivy
 The glance wandering on the sleeping waters of the circular
 moat
 Happens to surprise hermetic progress playing along
 All make-believe and of which cannot be feared enough
 The infinite seduction
 To believe it nothing given in power is lacking and it is true or
 almost
 The beautiful electric light provided that this does not fade it for
 you to think that some day it will seem yellow
 By heroic struggle suffering has been driven from a few of its
 fiefs
 And the distances can continue to melt
 Some go so far as to affirm that it is not impossible that man

May cease to devour man though we have not progressed too
much in that direction
However this sequence of sleight of hand tricks I shall take care
like a sparkling spider-web
That it does not get caught on my hat
What happens as one wishes has two sides and is fallacious
Again the best is balanced with the worst
Under the marvellous head-band of rockets
One has only to close one's eyes
To find again the table of the permanent

This being said the performance continues
Having considered or not the present
The action takes place in the veil of the head-dress of Isa-
beau de Bavière
All lace and moire
As fluid as the water that struts in the sun on the panes of
florists of today
The white stag with golden reflections comes out of the wood of
the Châtelet
In the foreground of his eyes which express the dream of the
songs of birds at evening
In the obliquity of the last ray the sense of a mysterious revelation
What else and who are known as able to weep
The winged star shudders he rushes upon the eagle with the
sword
But the eagle is everywhere
 straight upon him
 the warning has been given
By that man of whom historians are obstinate in reporting with
a purpose that escapes them
That he was clothed in white by that man of course who will not
be found again
Then the fall of a lance against a helmet here the musician has
performed a miracle



This is the whole reason going away when the hour might be
 struck without your being there
 In the shadows of the set the people are admitted to contemplate
 the great feasts
 It is always nice to see people eating on the stage
 From the interior of the meat-pie crowned with pheasants
 Dwarfs black on one side and on the other rainbow-colored lift
 the lid
 To spread out in a harnessing of small bells and laughter
 A *contrasted* brilliance of the marks of burning in the turning
 crust
Fade in to the fête of the Ardents *retake out of focus* the episode
 that follows closely that of the stag
 A man perhaps too skilful descends from the summit of the
 towers of Notre-Dame
 Hovering on a tight-rope
 His balancing pole of torches their unusual gleam in broad day-
 light
 The bush of the five savages of whom four are captives of an-
 other the sun of feathers
 The duc d'Orléans takes the torch the hand the bad hand
 And sometime afterwards at eight o'clock in the evening the
 hand
 One always remembers that it played with the glove
 The hand the glove one time two times *three times*
 In the angle on the background of the whitest palace the fine
 ambiguous features of Pierre de Lune on horseback
 Personifying the second luminary
To end on the emblem of the queen in tears
 A marigold for me more is nothing and nothing is more
 Yes without you
 The sun

Marseilles, December 1940

NEW DIRECTIONS IN PHONOGRAPH RECORDS

HARRY THORNTON MOORE

SUDDENLY, *as at sunrise, the whole earth had grown vocal*: Carlyle's phrase could aptly be used to describe the recent spread of interest in phonograph records that speak—an interest which is making possible a new direction in the use of the gramophone.

We have had speaking records from the first moment of the phonograph. But now the facilities for reproduction and the techniques for obtaining fidelity have reached a state of excellence at a time when there is a renaissance of the spoken word. Once before in America we had a respect for utterance as utterance—in the nineteenth century, when the ululating orators and all the bronze-lunged actors were merely the public front for the hosts of young and older men and women who flung out declamations in gaslit parlors. This emphasis on vocal effects (and on the grotesque posturings that often went with them) became unfashionable at about the end of the century. The pendulum swung far back: parlor declaimers fell into a disfavor which has lasted, acting reduced itself to a polite anemia of expression, and oratory itself faded with the deaths of Gough and Beecher and Ingersoll and with the diminution of Bryan in politics. Years later the radio, in a time of widespread social distress, brought oratory back to America with the reassuring, castigating, optimizing father-voice of Roosevelt. His delivery is not like that of the old orators: it is not hammy, yet it is something more than natural speaking, for in spite of the conversational ("chat") suggestion, the voice has song in it. Other orators have also come along—the screeching Hitler, the grimly loquacious Churchill—and during these years History-in-the-Making has thrust its voice and its drumcalls into every parlor. But the spoken-word

renaissance, like other movements of its kind, has shown several types of development: the Shakespearean triumphs of Gielgud and Maurice Evans have been in large part vocal triumphs, and today an increasing number of poets have been reading their work aloud in public. The record industry is keeping apace of these trends. Many people had discarded their gramophones in the early years of radio, but lately the intense campaign by the manufacturers has induced a renovation of old phonographs or purchases of new ones in combination with a radio unit. The reduction of record-prices has accounted for the greatest sale in the history of the wax discs. Although musical records are far in the lead, people are also looking for some of the features they are used to hearing on the radio or at clubs and theatres—speeches, plays, educational programs.

Some of the most interesting speech records—let us begin at the beginning—are purely historical. The originals of many of them were made long ago and consequently are poor recordings in comparison with those turned out today—but for listeners who want the past to touch them intimately, here are the true voices of yesterday. William Jennings Bryan's Cross of Gold speech, which was the sensation of the 1896 Democratic convention and shook the souls of tank-town audiences for a long time after that, is still obtainable. So are other speeches by him and by Edison, Andrew Carnegie, Barnum, Leo Tolstoy (in English—you have to strain to hear it), Gladstone, Jane Addams, Venizelos, George V, Florence Nightingale and many more. RCA-Victor has consolidated a good deal of this interest in historical voices into its *Cavalcade of Presidents* album, which includes speeches by every president after McKinley—it brings within the range of everyone's phonograph the varying accents and sentiments of Taft, Wilson, Harding, Coolidge, Hoover and the two Roosevelts. A record which may compel a good deal of interest in the future is the transcription of Edward VIII's abdication speech: this is history in the raw, as it was not a talk made in a gramophone factory in an attempt to recapture the tones of something that had

already happened—it is a king's voice directly telling his people and the world that he would rather give up his throne than *the woman I love*. Another historical item of great possibilities for listeners in future is the Recorded Lectures album *Then Came War: 1939*, which features Elmer Davis summarizing the events that led up to the Second World War and presents the speeches of Hitler, Chamberlain and Daladier: the actual words declaring a state of war may be heard. Linguaphone has collaborated with the United States government in publishing some record-series in the historical category. One of these is *Americans All—Immigrants All*, comprising twenty-four dramatic programs written by Gilbert Seldes for the Department of the Interior (Office of Education) and crisply performed by radio actors. These programs, especially usable for schools, show what various racial groups—English, Germans, Irish, Jews, Slavs, etc.—have done to help the development of the United States; the biographies of famous immigrants of the various national groups are dramatized. The *I'm An American* series, published by Linguaphone and the Immigration and Naturalization Service of the Department of Justice, begins with Archibald MacLeish reading his poem *America Was Promises* and has statements by Einstein, Thomas Mann and Luise Rainer upon their becoming American citizens.

The theatre has preserved many of its old memories on the phonograph. There are records by Sarah Bernhardt, Edwin Booth, Joseph Jefferson and other famous actors of yesterday. Passages from Shakespeare account for the greatest number of items in all the speaking-records list, and the work of Tree, Ellen Terry, Sothorn and Marlowe, Forbes-Robertson, John Barrymore and others is still obtainable: most of it is still being issued; discontinued items may often be obtained through specialized New York dealers such as the Gramophone Shop or the Linguaphone Institute. Some of the old-time actors may seem disappointing, due to the poor quality of early recordings, to changes in acting style, or to the senility of the performer when he made the re-

cording. In the last few years, notable recordings of Shakespeare have been made by John Gielgud, Maurice Evans and Orson Welles. Welles and his Mercury Theatre players have produced almost entire versions of *Julius Caesar*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Twelfth Night* and *Macbeth*. The last is by far the best: its sound-effects represent a new direction borrowed from radio. Previous Shakespeare items have included sound-effects, such as incidental music or knocking at a gate, but this excellently-acted Welles production goes much further—in the Cavern Scene, for example, the cauldron hisses when the baboon's blood is poured in, and the toads and snakes that are dropped in can be heard to plop. Columbia has also recorded Maurice Evans's un-tragic Hamlet, presenting his reading of the four great soliloquies, to which he gives little differentiation in tone and no suggestion of a development of character—it is often beautiful tenor chanting, but it is never Hamlet. Evans's *Richard II* album, on the other hand, finds him better suited to a character conceived largely in a lyrical vein; he and a fine supporting cast present the substance of the last three acts of the play. Evans has also made a record for the British Relief Society, on which he recites some of the "England" speeches from *Richard II* and *Henry V*. But the most stirring Shakespeare recordings are those in the large Linguaphone album by John Gielgud, who reads two sonnets and fifteen selections from the plays, including speeches by Hamlet, Hotspur, John of Gaunt, Henry V, Prospero and others, all touched to life by Gielgud's rich voice and superb phrasing and profound understanding of character. Gielgud has also made Victor records of his success in *The Good Companions* (British Victor-HMV) and, with Edith Evans, a lively scene from *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Comedy is also to be found on the Victor records featuring Noel Coward and Gertrude Lawrence in sequences from their stage successes in Coward's *Private Lives* and *Tonight at 8:30*. An item of more serious drama finds Robert Speaight in his magnificent reading of the Christmas Sermon from T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*. The Daggett Speech Series al-

bum has Walter Hampden reading from Shakespeare, Ibsen and the Bible, with other actors (including Moissi, Leslie Howard, Blanche Yurka) reading various poetic and dramatic selections and speech lectures. Raymond Massey's Victor album of scenes from *Abe Lincoln in Illinois* (with the supporting cast of the original company) has recently been supplemented by a Linguaphone disc of Massey's reading of the Gettysburg and Second Inaugural addresses, supplemented in turn by an Alexander Woollcott album, *For Us The Living*, a series of anecdotal footnotes to the Gettysburg Address done in the Town Crier's manner. The Columbia set of MacLeish's *Air-Raid* has some important sound-effects, particularly the Alfred Hitchcock-like transformation of a woman's voice, which has been singing the scales, into an air-raid siren. Lynn Fontanne pours all her vocal charm into the Victor album of *The White Cliffs*, which she made nationally known by several readings on the radio—but all the vocal charm in the theatrical world could never raise the text above the level of sentimental doggerel.

Foreign-language records have become difficult to obtain because of the war—just at a time when the war itself has increased the demand for such records, for it is making Americans conscious of other nations and other cultures in a way they were never conscious of them before. The records of Moissi's effectively hysterical Hamlet and Faust are sorely missed, and are impossible to get now. But Decca has an impressive list of foreign-language records available over here—and they have the virtue of being inexpensive. Carl Ebert reads from *Faust* and *Egmont*, and actors of the Comédie Française and the Théâtre de l'Odéon present scenes from Corneille, Molière, Hugo and others. Roger Monteaux reads some speeches from *Cyrano de Bergerac*, and Rostand's son Maurice recites the Wagram scene from his father's other famous play *L'Aiglon* and from his own *Napoléon IV*. Madeleine Renaud of the Comédie Française reads some of the poetry of Pierre Louys and Paul Claudel. Here are brilliant examples of classical and literary French, as spoken in the leading

theatres of Paris. Decca has also a fine example of modern conversational French in the record made by the aviators Costes and Le Brix, *Notre Raid autour du Monde*. The Gramophone Shop still has some other distinguished foreign items in stock, including some of Sacha Guitry's recordings of scenes from his own plays, but the latest report at this writing is that these items are selling rapidly and cannot at present be replaced. For those who are interested in acquiring the rudiments of foreign languages, there are Linguaphone sets which include courses in almost every language spoken on earth: most of them are complete and detailed courses, and are consequently somewhat expensive; most of them can be rented. Those wishing simplified conversational courses for beginning study or for review will find the Hugophone sets useful for the five most important Continental languages: these sets, issued by the Language Service Center, New York, are brief but thorough, they are reasonably priced, and useful supplementary books come with them. Ancient languages are also importantly represented among records that speak. The British scholar W. H. D. Rouse has made two records for Linguaphone which provide the basic sounds of Greek as well as passages from the Classics in the "restored" pronunciation, and the Harvard University Vocarium series (Harvard University Film Service) offers two huge albums of Latin Readings. One of these sets is recorded by Professor E. K. Rand, who ranges over most of Latin literature on ten large records; the other album contains readings not only by Professor Rand but also by Werner Jaeger, Robert Speaight and other teachers and classically-educated actors. Texts and translations from the Loeb Classics are supplied in neat pamphlets with the records, helping to make these two of the most useful and enriching spoken-word albums. Erpi Classroom Films, Inc., publish a set of records for basic training in the Latin language, and the International Educational Society (of England; released by Columbia Gramophone, Ltd., the English division of the Columbia Phonograph Co., Bridgeport, Conn.), issues a record by Professor R. S. Conway with pronunci-

ations of specimen passages; also several lectures on Latin literature by Professor Conway. There are also records of more recent languages, including one of the Gaelic by Shan O'Cuiv, who reads an Irish story and three poems. Harvard Vocarium series includes two records of readings from Dante by Professor C. H. Grandgent, which unfortunately are now difficult to obtain. Professor F. N. Robinson's Middle English record—passages from *The Debate of the Body and the Soul* and from Chaucer's *Pardoner's Tale*—is still available. Chaucer has also been excellently read by Professor Harry Morgan Ayres of Columbia University, on a record issued by the National Council of Teachers of English, for whom he has done another disc with passages from *Beowulf* (and he has also privately made a record with readings from Dante, obtainable from the Gramophone Shop). Linguaphone has made a series of readings showing how Anglo-Saxon, Middle (Chaucerian), Shakespearean and Eighteenth Century English should be pronounced; these are accompanied by the excellent booklets Linguaphone always supplies, which furnish the texts and phonetic transcriptions. Getting into modern English, there is Harvard's record by Professor Bliss Perry, and the vast list of the International Educational Society's recordings (Columbia Gramophone, Ltd.), which includes lectures by Sir Oliver Lodge, Julian Huxley, Sir Norman Angell, and many others. Bible readings are found in the previously mentioned Daggett album (Walter Hampden reads the Prodigal Son story), in a record by Harvard's famous "Old Copey"—Charles Townsend Copeland—who presents passages from the Book of Revelation, and in the Linguaphone album made by Professor A. Lloyd James of London University, who reads a number of selections from various parts of the Bible. It is difficult to imagine speaking records without some representation of William Lyon Phelps, who discourses about teaching and about cats; these two records are made by Linguaphone, which also published a pair of witty (autographed!) Shaw records, *Spoken English and Broken English*. Lectures provide one of the largest subdivisions of spoken

records, and one with a great tendency to expand. The newest items in this field are being prepared by a new Chicago company, Recorded Lectures, Inc., and distributed by Bell and Howell. Lew Sarrett, Paul V. McNutt, Edwin Powell Hubble and others present lectures on a great variety of educational subjects, on nearly a thousand records. Columbia has made an interesting album of patriotic selections, *Our American Heritage* (from Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, Wilson and others), read by the brilliant young Shakspearean actor, Wesley Addy.

Then there is poetry on records—and this is the most forward-looking and new-directional phase of the entire subject. Naturally there is a good deal of traditionalism here, and lately the manufacturers have been issuing albums of anthologies of great English poetry, read by actors and professional reciters. Musicraft is at this writing about to release an album of this kind made by David Ross of the Poet's Gold radio program. Columbia has recently put out a set of poetry readings by radio producer Norman Corwin, under the editorial direction of the National Council of Teachers of English, who have done some excellent recordings of their own and should have known better than to let Norman Corwin slaughter some of the finest English poems. There has been some praise of "an American voice" (*at last!*), but when the voice is unaccompanied by any understanding whatsoever of the way poetry should be read, the results are painful. Victor has issued an album by Cornelia Otis Skinner, with incidental music. Miss Skinner has an American voice, and while some of her readings are a bit artificial, most of them are pleasing. Edith Evans's Columbia album, *The Voice of Poetry Vol. I*, reveals much that is wrong with the English voice as far as American listeners are concerned: this superb actress is simply too stagey for recordings of lyric poetry for American ears. On the other hand, her fellow-actor and frequent co-star, John Gielgud, has made a supremely good set of this kind with *The Voice of Poetry Vol. 2*—it stands with Robert Speaight's six Harvard records above all others of its kind. Gielgud's album ranges from Jonson and Waller to T. S.

Eliot; Gielgud can by the magnificence of his reading give a new and burning importance to the slightest poem. Speaight's readings include Donne, Blake, Wordsworth, Keats, Hopkins and others: he is a profound, thoughtful reader with a rich voice that is found at its best in measured iambic pentameter lines. Choral readings are also popular, and several interesting records of choral verse-speaking have been made at Eastbourne, England; over here, Victor has published a very pleasant and amusing album by the Koralites, who present deftly comic readings of Ogden Nash's poems. It is regrettable that Ion Swinley, the late Shakespearean actor, never made an album: his reading of Gray's *Elegy* on a Columbia Gramophone record (which also has the sound of the bells and organ of Stoke Poges Church) is tonally and logically excellent.

The majority of listeners are stimulated most of all by records of poets reading from their own work—even when the poet is a poor reciter, he nevertheless has for most people the authentic touch. National Council of Teachers of English have done the historical phase of this subject a valuable service in reissuing the Vachel Lindsay records of *The Congo* and other poems, for Lindsay was one of the pioneers in helping to bring back vocal poetry; these are old recordings, with mechanical imperfections, but Lindsay himself comes plangently through all the defects. The same distributor has also published W. H. Auden's moving recital of his own poem on the death of Yeats. Auden has also recorded for the Harvard Vociarium series which, under the direction of Professor Fred C. Packard, Jr., and James R. Brewster, has taken the lead in producing verse-records by living poets. Veteran poets such as Jeffers, Hillyer, Gogarty, McCord, Coffin and Fletcher are copiously represented, but the series also (most commendably) includes the work of younger or less-known poets like John Holmes and George Barker and Theodore Spencer. (Some of these records are published in collaboration with New Directions.) National Council of Teachers of English joined with Erpi in issuing five records by Robert Frost, who reads some

of his best-known verses. Musicraft has put out an interesting album of the late James Weldon Johnson's readings from his *God's Trombones*, Negro poem-sermons in a *Green Pastures* vein. Musicraft has also done an album of Carl Sandburg chanting folk-ballads from his *American Songbag*—Sandburg's recitation of his own poems has just been issued by Decca, and NCTE is publishing poetic readings by Mark Van Doren and S. V. Benét. In England, Columbia, Gramophone, Ltd., has recorded Walter de la Mare, Henry Newbolt, V. Sackville West, Christopher Hassall and John Drinkwater in readings from their own work, while over here the now defunct Timely Records company had the late Edwin Markham read some of his work, including *The Man With the Hoe*. And National Council of Teachers of English have just issued new readings of their own poems by Stephen V. Benét, Archibald MacLeish and Mark Van Doren.

There is no space for an even slightly detailed discussion of more than a few of the authors who read from their own work. And this space must be given to the bold, the fresh-visioned, the authentic avant garde, who make the best and most stimulating records of all, which point toward a different kind of projection, response and understanding than we have had in literature in the immediate past. People who write material with a specialized appeal are the best interpreters of it, or so it has proved in the cases of the avant-gardists who have made records: at the very least it may be said that they have great gifts as readers. Those who have heard Cocteau's records of his own work (unobtainable here at this time) have undergone an exciting experience. Edith Sitwell's Decca records of her *Façade*, read by her and Constant Lambert to the accompaniment of William Walton's *Façade Suite*, have recitations as bizarre as the poems themselves, but with a distinct rhythmic appeal to the ear. T. S. Eliot's Harvard Vociarium record of *Gerontion* and *The Hollow Men*, read with exactly the right weary intonation, shows how moving and how actually instructive such records can be. E. E. Cummings's sardonic recitations of his own poems on his (now difficult to

obtain) Harcourt, Brace disc go a long way toward improving relations between the poet and some of the readers who are outraged by the distorted print-arrangements of the verses. Gertrude Stein's records also help make a bridge across the gulf of incommunicability: the three records she made for Erpi contain readings from *The Making of Americans* as well as several of her portraits—the commonsense quality of her vocal interpretation, with its adroit phrasing, has brought many skeptical readers of her prose closer to an understanding of the work and a sympathy with it. Ezra Pound's recordings of his own poems and of some of his translations have not yet been released, but those who have heard them at Widener Library, Harvard, have found them very stirring, particularly the rendition—to the accompaniment of kettle-drums—of Pound's version of the old Anglo-Saxon poem, *The Sea-Farer*. But the finest, most stimulating record of all is that made some years ago by James Joyce for the Orthological Institute (Cambridge, England). Joyce reads part of the Anna Livia Plurabelle section of *Finnegans Wake*: the sweet tenor voice, the touch of brogue, and the essential poetry of the thing combine to make the hearing of the piece a literary experience of another dimension than we are used to. And it indicates a future in which the senses that have been so long neglected in literary apprehension shall be used again, with the author's voice showing us, through the very texture of his material, what the material itself means and where its most significant values lie. For as Gordon Bottomley has pointed out—in his pamphlet-introduction to John Gielud's album of readings of English verse—*The sound of poetry is part of its meaning*.

THE ISOLATION OF MODERN POETRY

DELMORE SCHWARTZ

THE aspect of modern poetry which is most discussed is of course its difficulty, its famous obscurity. Certain discussions, usually by contemporary poets, have done much to illuminate the new methods and forms of contemporary poetry. Certain other discussions have illustrated an essential weakness inherent in all readers, the fact that the love of one kind of writing must often interfere with the understanding of another kind. Wordsworth knew this weakness very well.

"It is supposed," he says, "that by the act of writing in verse an Author makes a formal engagement that he will gratify certain known habits of association; that he not only apprises the reader that certain classes of ideas and expressions will be found in his book, but that others will be carefully excluded."

This seems to me a perfect statement of the first barrier which intervenes between the reader and any kind of writing with which he is not familiar. But it is far from being sufficient as a defense of modern poetry. Wordsworth was engaged in defending his poetry against the habitual expectations of the reader accustomed to Dryden and Pope. It is necessary now to defend the modern poet against the reader accustomed to Wordsworth and Keats. The specific difference between such a poet as Wordsworth and the typical modern poet requires a specific explanation.

There is another defense of the modern poet which seems utterly insufficient to me. It is said that the modern poet must be complex because modern life is complicated. This is the view of Mr. T. S. Eliot, among others. "It appears likely," he says, "that poets in our civilization, as it exists at present, must be *difficult*. Our civilization comprehends great variety and complex-

ity, and this variety and complexity, playing upon a refined sensibility, must produce various and complex results." Mr. Eliot's explanation seems to me not so much wrong as superficial. I need hardly say that Mr. Eliot is seldom superficial in any regard; here, I think Mr. Eliot is identifying the surface of our civilization with the surface of our poetry. But the complexity of modern life, the disorder of the traffic on a business street or the variety of reference in the daily newspaper, is far from being the same thing as the difficulties of syntax, tone, diction, metaphor, and allusion which face the reader in the modern poem. If one is the product of the other, the causal sequence involves a number of factors on different levels, and to imply, as I think Mr. Eliot does, that there is a simple causal relationship between the disorder of modern life and the difficulty of modern poetry is merely to engender misunderstanding by oversimplification.

Now obscurity is merely one of the peculiar aspects of modern poetry. There are others which are just as important. Nothing could be more peculiar than the fact that modern poetry is lyric poetry. Almost without exception there is a failure or an absence of narrative or dramatic writing in verse. With the possible exception of Hardy and Robinson, it is difficult to think of any modern poet who will be remembered for his writing in any form other than that of the lyric.

It is obvious by contrast that the major portion of the poetry of the past, of poetry until we reach the latter half of the 19th century, is narrative and dramatic as well as lyrical in its most important moments; and it is equally evident that none of that poetry is obscure in the modern sense.

I need not mention further characteristics of modern poetry which co-exist with its obscurity and its limitation to the lyric form. Both characteristics seem to me to be closely related to each other and to spring from the essential condition of the modern poet. The way in which this condition, if that is the adequate word for what I mean, the way in which this essential circumstance affects the modern poet is a rather involved matter, but

had better be stated bluntly and crudely at this point. The modern poet has been very much affected by the condition and the circumstance that he has been separated from the whole life of society. This separation has taken numerous forms and has increased continually. It is a separation which occurs with an uneven development in all the matters with which the modern poet must concern himself. Different poets have been differently affected, and their efforts to cope with this separation have been various. But there is a common denominator which points to a common cause.

The beginning of the process of separation, if one can rightly discern a beginning in such things, is the gradual destruction of the world-picture which, despite many changes, had for a long time been taken for granted by the poet. Amid much change, development, and modification, the Bible (and the classics, too, mainly through Ovid's "Metamorphoses") had provided a view of the universe which circumscribed the area in which anyone ventured to think, or use his imagination. It would of course be a serious mistake to suppose that this view of the universe had not been disturbed in numerous ways long before the modern poet arrived upon the scene. But it is doubtful that the poet before the time of Blake felt a conflict between two pictures of the world, the picture provided by the Bible and the one provided by the physical sciences.¹

In Blake's rage against Newton and Voltaire, and in his interest, as a poet, in the doctrines of Swedenborg, and in his attempt to construct his own view of the universe, we come upon the first full example of this difficulty of the poet. There is a break between intellect and sensibility; the intellect finds unreasonable what the sensibility and the imagination cannot help but accept

¹ For example, Pope, a Catholic, was able to write as a Deist in "The Essay on Man" and elsewhere without feeling the extraordinary conflict which Tennyson, among many others, suffered between his inherited beliefs and the new scientific doctrines of the 19th century. Hardy is another example. Who can forget the poem in which he wishes to go out on Christmas Eve and see the cattle kneeling at the birth hour of the Saviour? This, it will be remembered, was an old story told in childhood and Hardy says he would gladly go out to the barn, "Hoping it might be so!"

because of centuries of imagining and feeling in terms of definite images of the world. Milton's use of a Ptolemaic cosmology, though he knew that the Copernican one was mathematically superior, is an example from a still earlier period; a proto-example, so to speak; it shows with exactitude the extent to which the poet depended upon the traditional world-picture of Western culture. After Blake, the Romantic poets are further instances; not only were they intensely interested in new conceptions of the world, new philosophies; but in turning to Nature as they did, they displayed their painful sense that the poet no longer belonged to the society into which he was born, and for which, presumably, he was writing his verse.

But these authors are not modern poets. And it was not until the middle of the 19th century that the progress of the physical sciences brought forth a body of knowledge which was in serious and open conflict with the picture of the world which had been in use for so long a time. This conflict had been going on, of course, for centuries, but it is not until we come to an occasion like the publication of the Darwinian theory that the conflict becomes so radical and so obvious that no poet of ambition can seriously avoid it. I am not referring to any conflict between religious doctrine and scientific knowledge, for this conflict, if it actually exists, is hardly the direct concern of the poet at any time. It is a question of the conflict between the sensibility of the poet, the very images which he viewed as the world, and the evolving and blank and empty universe of 19th century science.

The development of modern culture from Darwin and Huxley to Freud, Marx, and the author of "The Golden Bough," has merely extended, hastened, and intensified this process of removing the picture of the world which the poet took for granted as the arena of his imagination, and putting in its place another world-picture which he could not use. This is illustrated broadly in the career of such a poet as Yeats. Hearing as a young man that man was descended from the ape, Yeats occupied himself for many years with theosophy, black magic, and the least respect-

able forms of psychical research, all in the effort to regain a view of the universe and of man which would restore dignity and importance to both man and the universe. We may invent an illustration at this point and suppose that when Yeats or any other modern poet of similar interests heard of how many million light years the known regions of the universe comprise, he felt a fundamental incongruity between his own sense of the importance of human lives and their physical smallness in the universe. This is merely a difficulty in *imagining*—one has an image of a very small being in a world of inconceivable immensity; but that's just the point, the difficulty with images. The philosopher and the theologian know that size is not a particularly important aspect of any thing; but the poet must see, and what he has had to see was this incongruity between the importance man attributes to himself and his smallness against the background of the physical world of 19th century science.

But this is only one aspect of the poet's isolation; it is the aspect in which the sensibility of the poet has been separated from the theoretical knowledge of his time. The isolation of the modern poet has, however, taken an even more difficult form, that of being separated by poetry from the rest of society. Here one must guard against a simple view of what this separation has amounted to in any particular context. It is not a simple matter of the poet's lacking an audience, for that is an effect, rather than a cause, of the character of modern poetry. And it is not, on the other hand, the simple matter of the poet's being isolated from the usual habits and customs and amusements of his time and place; for if this were the trouble, then the poet could perhaps be justly accused of retiring to his celebrated ivory tower; and it would then be quite reasonable to advise the poet as some have done; to tell him that he ought to get "experience," see the world, join a political party, and in any case make sure that he participates in the habitual activities of his society.

The fundamental isolation of the modern poet began not with the poet and his way of life; but rather with the whole way of life

of modern society. It was not so much the poet, as poetry, culture, sensibility, imagination, that were isolated. On the one hand, there was less and less room, in the course of the industrialization of society for such a monster as the cultivated man; a man's taste for literature had at best nothing to do with most of the activities which constitute daily life in an industrial society. On the other hand, culture, since it could not find a place in modern life, has fed upon itself increasingly and has created its own autonomous satisfactions, removing itself further from any essential part in the organic life of society.

Stated thus, this account may seem abstract and even implausible. It would be best before going further to mention certain striking evidences of what has taken place. There is, for instance, the classic American joke about how bored father is at the opera or the concert; the poet too has been an essentially comic figure, from time to time. But this homely instance may seem merely the product of vulgarity and lack of taste. A related tendency which has been much observed by foreigners is the belief in America that women were supposed to be interested in literature, culture, and "such things," while men had no time for those trivial delights because they were engaged in what is called *business*. But this instance may seem local in that it is American and inconclusive since it has to do with the poet's audience rather than with the poet himself. There is then a third example, one which seems almost dramatic to me, the phenomenon of American authors of superior gifts going to Europe and staying there. Henry James is the most convincing case; one can scarcely doubt that he lived in Europe because there the divorce between culture and the rest of life, although it had begun, had by no means reached the point which was unavoidable in America. George Santayana, Ezra Pound, and T. S. Eliot are cases which come later in time; we do not know exactly why these men went to Europe; the significant fact is that they did not come back to America. I do not merely wish to suggest a critical view of the rôle of culture in American life, for the same process was occur-

ring in Europe, though at a slower rate and with local modifications. The important point is the intuitive recognition on the part of both the artist and the rest of the population that culture and sensibility—and thus the works by means of which they sustained their existence—did not belong, did not fit into the essential workings of society.

At this point, it might be objected that culture has never played a very important part in the life of any society; it has only engaged the attention and devotion of the elect, who are always few in number. This view seems utterly false to me, and for the sake of showing briefly how false it has been historically, I want to quote one of the greatest living classical scholars on the part that dramatic tragedy played in the life of Periclean Athens. Werner Jaeger writes that:

"After the state organized the dramatic performances held at the festival of Dionysus, tragedy more and more evoked the interest and participation of the entire people. . . . Its power over them was so vast that they held it responsible for the spirit of the whole state . . . it is no exaggeration to say that the tragic festival was the climax of the city's life." (*Paideia*, by Werner Jaeger, pp. 245-246).

No contrast could be more extreme than this one between the function of the Greek dramatist and the modern poet in the societies of their time.

One significant effect of this divorce has been the poet's avowal of the doctrine of Art for Art's Sake, a doctrine which is meaningful only when viewed in the context in which it is always announced, that is, to repeat, a society which had no use and no need for Art, other than as a superfluous amusement or decoration. And another significant and related effect is the sentiment of the poet, and at times his convinced belief, that he has no connections with or allegiances to anything else. Nowhere is this belief stated with more clarity than in the following prose poem by Baudelaire, who in so many ways is either the first modern poet or the typical one:

THE STRANGER

"Whom do you love most of all, puzzling man? Your father, your mother, your brother, or your sister?"

"I have neither father, mother, brother, nor sister."

"Do you love your friends then?"

"You have just used a word whose meaning remains unknown to me to this very day."

"Do you love your country, then?"

"I ignore the latitude in which it is situated."

"Then do you love Beauty?"

"I love her with my whole will; she is a goddess and immortal."

"Do you love gold?"

"I hate it just as you hate God."

"Well then: extraordinary stranger, what *do* you love?"

"I love the clouds . . . the clouds which pass . . . far away . . . far away . . . the marvellous clouds."

It would be possible to take this stranger who is the modern poet with less seriousness, if he were merely affecting a pose, attempting to dramatize himself or be clever. The shocking passages in modern poetry have sometimes been understood in this way as Bohemianism, and the conventional picture or caricature of the poet has been derived from this Bohemianism, considered as a surface. But the sentiments which Baudelaire attributes to his stranger are the deepest feelings of the modern poet. He does feel that he is a stranger, an alien, an outsider; he finds himself without a father or mother, or he is separated from them by the opposition between his values as an artist and their values as respectable members of modern society. This opposition cannot be avoided because neither a government subsidy, nor yearly prizes, nor a national academy can disguise the fact that there is no genuine place for the poet in modern life. He has no country, no community, insofar as he is a poet, and his greatest enemy is

money, since poetry does not yield him a livelihood. It is natural then that he should emphasize his allegiance, his devotion to Beauty, that is to say, to the practice of Art and the works of art which already exist. And thus it is that Baudelaire's stranger announces that what he loves most of all is to look at the clouds, that is, to exercise his own sensibility. The modern poet has had nothing to do, no serious activity other than the cultivation of his own sensibility. There is a very famous passage in Walter Pater advising just this course, but it is hardly necessary to quote it at this late date.

From this standpoint, the two aspects of modern poetry which I marked at the start can be seen as natural and almost inevitable developments. In cultivating his own sensibility, the modern poet participated in a life which was removed from the lives of other men, who, insofar as they could be considered important characters, were engaged in cultivating money or building an industrial society. Thus it became increasingly impossible for the poet to write about the lives of other men; for not only was he removed from their lives, but above all the culture and the sensibility which made him a poet could not be employed when the proposed subject was the lives of human beings in whom culture and sensibility had no organic function. There have been unsuccessful efforts on the part of able poets to write about bankers and about railroad trains, and in such examples, the poet has been confronted by what seems on the surface a technical problem, the extraordinary difficulty of employing poetic diction, meter, language, and metaphor in the contexts of modern life. It is not that contemporary poets do not speak or think poetically; human beings at any time in general do not speak or think in ways which are immediately poetic, and if they did there would be no need for poetry. The trouble has been that the idiom of poetic style and the normal thought and speech of the community have been moving in opposite directions and have had little or no relationship to each other. The normal state of affairs occurs when poetry is continually digesting the prose of its time

and folk art and speech are providing a broad base for major literary efforts.

Since the only life available to the poet as a man of culture has been the cultivation of his own sensibility, that is the only subject available to him, if we may assume that a poet can only write about subjects of which he has an absorbing experience in every sense.³ Thus we find that in much modern poetry, the poet is writing about other poetry, just as in modern painting, the art works and styles of the past have so often become the painter's subject. For writing about other poetry and in general about works of art is the most direct way of grasping one's sensibility as a subject. But more than that, since one can only write about one's sensibility, one can only write lyric poetry. Dramatic and narrative poetry require a grasp of the lives of other men, and it is precisely these lives, to repeat, that are outside the orbit of poetic style and poetic sensibility. An analogous thing has, of necessity, happened in the history of the novel; the development of the autobiographical novel has resulted in part from the inability of the novelist to write about any one but himself or other people in relation to himself.

From this isolation of poetic sensibility the obscurity of modern poetry also arises even as the novelists turn to the stream-of-consciousness method. The poet is engaged in following the minutest movements, tones, and distinctions of his own being as a poetic man. Because this private life of his sensibility is the chief subject available to him, it becomes increasingly necessary to have recourse to new and special uses of language. The more the poet has cultivated his own sensibility, the more unique and

³ The connection between the way in which an author lives and his writing is of course a complicated one. But how close the connection is and how effective can be seen if we ask ourselves the following questions about some of the great authors of our time: would Eliot have written *The Waste Land*, in its present detail at least, if he had not lived in London? would Pound have written the later *Cantos*, if he had not lived on the Italian Riviera? would either Pound or Eliot have written in the expatriate-cosmopolitan frame of reference, using all culture as a free field, if they were not expatriate Americans in Europe? Certainly Joyce might not have written *Finnegans Wake* if he had not taught in a Berlitz school and Perse could not have written *Anabase* if he had not been sent to Asia as a diplomat, and Yeats might not have written some of his later poetry if he had not lived on Lady Gregory's estate.

special has his subject and thus his method become. The common language of daily life, its syntax, habitual sequences, and processes of association are precisely the opposite of what he needs, if he is to make poetry from what absorbs him as a poet, his own sensibility.

Sometimes, indeed, the poet has taken this conflict between sensibility and modern life as his subject. The early fiction of Thomas Mann concerns itself repeatedly with the opposition between the artist and the bourgeoisie, and in such a story as "Tonio Kröger," we see the problem most explicitly; the artist feels at home nowhere and he suffers from an intense longing to be normal and bourgeois himself. Again, there is the famous device of modern poetry which was invented by Laforgue and used most successfully by T. S. Eliot—the ironic contrast between a past in which culture was an important part of life and the present in which the cultural monument sits next to vulgarity and insensitivity. This has been misunderstood very often as a yearning to go back to a past idyllically conceived. It is nothing of the kind; it is the poet's conscious experience of the isolation of culture from the rest of society. And Yeats too, in the gap and conflict he saw between "objectivity" and "subjectivity" in "A Vision" and many poems, was echoing this fact.

I would like to cite one more instance of this condition. Three years ago one of the very best modern poets lectured and read his own poetry at Harvard. As a normal citizen, this man is an executive of an important corporation. At the conclusion of his lecture and reading of his own poetry, this poet and business man remarked to one of the instructors who had welcomed him: "I wonder what the boys at the office would think of this."

But I have spoken throughout as if this isolation was in every sense a misfortune. It is certainly a misfortune so far as the life of the whole community is concerned; this is evident in the character of popular taste, in the kind of fiction, play, and movie which is successful, as compared with the popular authors of the 19th century, who were very often the best authors also. But

on the other hand, it seems to me that the period of modern poetry, the age which begins with Baudelaire, is undoubtedly one in which the art of poetry has gained greatly not only in the number of fine poets, but in technical resources of all kinds. If the enforced isolation of the poet has made dramatic and narrative poetry almost impossible, it has, on the other hand, increased the uses and the powers of languages in the most amazing and the most valuable directions.

I have also spoken as if this isolation of the poet has already reached its conclusion. Whether it has or not, and whether it would be entirely desirable that it should, may be left as an unanswered and perhaps unanswerable question. It is true, at any rate, that during the past ten years a new school of poets has attempted to free itself from the isolation of poetry by taking society itself as the dominant subject.* The attempt has been a brilliant and exciting one in many ways; the measure of its success is not yet clear, particularly since it has been inspired by the present crisis of society; and its relative popularity may also be limited to contemporary and transient interests. But the very nature of the effort testifies in its own way to the isolation which haunts modern poetry, and from which these poets have been trying to escape.

November 1939

* These are the poets who, significantly enough, have invented the recurrent figure of "the island" and "islands" as a symbol of isolation. From the point of view of this essay, the leading themes of the Agrarian-Regionalist poets, such as Tate and Ransom, represent another, very different effort to get back to the center of the community and to destroy their isolation as poets.

“STOP IT! I LIKE IT!”

A Study in Semantics

NOAH JONATHAN JACOBS

THIS curious bit of verbal behavior presents an astonishing semantic situation. The casuistry of love is here raised to the level of a literary form known as antithetic parallelism. The antiphonal arrangement of the monosyllables lends a tone of excitement to the proceedings and reflects that oscillation between deferred hope and distracted joy which is the despair of lovers. At the same time, the rhythmic balance of the clauses satisfies the harmonious movement natural to the human mind which soon succumbs, in love as in religion, to the primitive chant of elevated prose.

Bold exegesis of the said title brings to light three main interpretations: (1) The clauses may be related to each other as protasis and apodosis (“If you would stop, I’d like it”), as cause and consequence (“Because you stop, I like it”), or as a sequence in time (“After you stop, I like it”). (2) The thought expressed by the second clause is elucidated by the affirmation of its opposite in the first clause. “Stop It” now means “Don’t Stop It”—an amazing verbal swindle known as enantiosis or escape by ambiguity. (3) Two detached thoughts, belonging to two linguistically disparate hierarchies, are artlessly conjoined with no discernible principle of reconciliation, and the two incongruent spheres are left hospitably undisturbed by rationalization. The discrepancy is not even acknowledged.

The first interpretation, with its three variations, is dismissed as contrary to experience by those best qualified to know. It appears incredible even to those who, like myself, are familiar with such ravishing confusion only by hearsay. These matters are, however, alarmingly vague and I leave them for others to explain more precisely.

The second interpretation is a form of poetical ambiguity in which two antithetical thoughts are insolubly combined within the confines of one vocable, a species of irony in which one phrase bears the double burden of two rival and simultaneous conceptions inimical to one another but endowed with equal cogency. One meaning is reserved for the speaker and one mockingly intended for the audience. In this case, the disconcerting injunction "Stop It" (especially in the mouth of a goddess with yellow hair and scarlet nails) is no longer a signal of alarm or insurrection. On the contrary, it is a reluctant verbal concession to the prevailing sex mores unconvincingly uttered to palliate the alleged turpitude of the second clause in which the vocabulary of primitive felicity asserts itself. The mutiny between the wit and the will is thus subtly rationalized by rendering lip service to the social world of culture and exhibiting at the same time a meretricious partiality for the sensuous life embedded in the organism itself. Behind a verbal screen of simulated asceticism our heroine enjoys the delights of this world, protesting while capitulating. Such is the tribute pleasure pays to virtue! While the voice of Jacob the deceiver cries "Stop It," the hands of Esau reach for the blessing, eager to indulge their secret preoccupation—

Du kerkerst den Geist in ein tönend Wort,
Doch der Freie wandelt im Sturme fort.

This persuasive *argumentum ad hominem* is a fatal example of linguistic delinquency so prominent in the mental life of women and is to be admired as an astute piece of female diplomacy deliberately calculated to bewilder the male. I suggest it in the hope that it may serve as a frightful warning to those who contemplate straying from the path of virtue.

The heroine of the third interpretation, because of some unfortunate obduracy of temper or lack of verbal agility, prefers to be consistent and neurotic rather than hypocritical and sane.

She has become the victim of her own gesture of deception ("Stop It") originally intended for her audience. She finds it an imposture and a burden to lay siege under false colors or to use the insolent subterfuge of contradiction to gain her ends, and so remains undaunted, like Balaam's ass, under the tension of two incompatible impulses. The same organism has become the uncomfortable lodging-place of the two incongruous worlds of culture and biology whose demands are equally valid, cogent, and imperious. Or, if the reader will pardon the slang, an adventitious, extra-dermal, linguistic mechanism, extraneous to the organism's integral configuration, has, by some inadvertence in human evolution, been given pseudo-priority over the life-enhancing, planet-born wisdom of the body. Our semantic victim is thus left suspended on the mendacious seesaw of inhibition and encouragement, of gratification and remorse, where desire mingles with fear, solicitation with shame, possession with feigned astonishment.

Had our heroine taken courses in neo-positivism or spent her evenings at home reading the moral skeptics, she would at least have had an academic solution to her problem. She would then regard "Stop It" as a propaedeutic or heuristic fiction necessary to justify completely divergent acts. A painful and sterile stage in her life would be sweetened by this illusion. As it is, her failure to appreciate the fictive character of all discursive thought or the subtle uses of the linguistic artifice of equivocation (a unique human device from which politics, poetry, and religion derive their chief strength, and which is indeed the seed of all our myths and the origin of all our ideals) deprives her of her most formidable weapon in the war of the sexes—a form of voluntary poverty which has little to recommend it. Life, however, has dealt harshly with her, and we should refrain from judging.

A word now about the neglected male! Deriving boldness from his vanity and guided by his perilous ardor, the male at first eagerly pursues his fevered preference. His animal expectations, however, are soon diverted from their scandalous enter-

prise by the hostile clamor of the female temper which exacts horrible vengeance from those presumptuous. If he is not too violently affected by the vertigo of arrested motion and the sudden rush of blood back to the head, he might even forego his too eagerly accepted task—a generous renunciation which only the prodigality of youth can afford. If he is head-strong, he will resort to a well-recognized offensive and seek an early showdown; if he is inept, his hungry presumption will be buried open-mouthed. But if he is docile, he will retreat prudently and “sue for grace with suppliant knee.” He might even relish the deception without himself being deceived—perhaps the wisest course. But unless he is incorrigible and obtuse, with no balancing, alternative instincts, he will desist from taking the citadel whose high walls are impregnable to access and whose artillery invulnerable to insurrection.

Our vehement hero is by this time aware of the fateful implications of his ardor and wisely renounces where he is bound to fail. He gains new insight from his misfortune which he takes to be one more mournful example of that *innere Zerrissenheit* which tortures the modern mind and throws it into confusion. He, too, is the victim of moral hemiplegia which is the specific disease of our modern, index-conditioned society and the dominant mood of our schizoid culture. This congenital split in the tongue of truth cuts to the very heart of modern life and is indeed the very synonym of modernity. Much of this may be due to man's failure to distinguish the limits of a vicarious, neat, portable, verbal culture (“Stop It”) which has been superimposed on the baffling, un-speakable, fugitive realm of living things (“I Like It”). We see with labels instead of with our retinas, and salivate, like Pavlov's dogs, at sounds instead of things. Nothing is worse for the health of the average intellect than to believe that the crowing of the cock releases the dawn.

Semantics, which is making much noise in the world today, recognizes that some kind of speech eugenics must be practised in the interest of public health and mental hygiene. Our prob-

lems are essentially semantic ones and it is in this field that the decisive battles must be fought. Culture is the product of language and it is by means of language that it penetrates, modifies, and transforms the biological environment, thus giving experience a new dimension. This interpenetration is profound and complicated. Our task is to distinguish the two realms of culture and biology, to discover their mutual influences, and to re-establish a vital commerce between them by means of shuttle concepts, with due regard to the problem of appropriate translation from one level to another. The whole fabric of language must be plunged into the staining juices of life if we are to recover the continuity of moral experience with the normal processes of living. To deny the validity of the life of the flesh ("I Like It") removes us too far from our instinctive bases; it cuts morality adrift from its moorings in human experience and can only lead to sterility. On the other hand, to regard the world of moral values as meaningless (neopositivism) or false (moral nihilism) or insignificant (moral relativism) is to ignore the moral insight of the race and the distilled wisdom of the most sensitive ethical minds. Reason is a feeble light but without it all would be darkness. The whole momentum of anti-rationalism, so congenial to modern thought, is brought to bear against the restraining influences of culture. The nervous system reacts feverishly to the continuous bombardment of superimposed restraints ("Stop It") for which it is biologically unprepared. Hence our crisis mentality!

We now find ourselves suspended in a middle state between two worlds, "a world that is dead and one powerless to be born." In the world that is dead lie buried our vaunted ideals of capitalism, pacifism, individualism. Democracy itself lies mortally wounded, ravished and bleeding from internal wounds like "a girl in the night of her spent maidenhood." The road behind us is strewn with the wreckage of broken hopes and tarnished ideals, suggesting to weaker spirits painful dissolution and ultimate chaos. Before us lies the new world in which men shall live "well-

fed, free, educated and wise." Our transition to this world is to be under the banner of Semantics. Much is promised, but much will have been accomplished if this new discipline only succeeds in keeping clean our instruments of thought and halting the ravages of "blabitis"—

—lo, I who have wept

All day and night, beseech Thee by my tears,
 And by that dread response of curse and groan
 Men alternate across these hemispheres,
 Vouchsafe us such a half-hour's hush alone,
 In compensation for our stormy years:
 As heaven has paused from song, let earth from moan!

AUGMENT OF THE NOVEL

EZRA POUND

SOME ninety years ago Flaubert held the opinion that he was doing a job which neither the god of that epoch, Victor Hugo, nor Balzac had attempted. It seems improbable that anyone save "les bichons" (The Goncourts) and one or two of their intimates obtained, at that time, any clear perception of what Flaubert was aiming at. He had to explain, or was driven to explaining it to Sainte Beuve and other lights of the then literary world of Paris in words of one syllable. Something differed from slap-dash and from panorama. Something stayed different from the Christmas etchings of Hardy that came nearly half a century later. Balzac wanted to paint the whole human comedy, but in a series of volumes. Hardy's "Greek effects" are due to the nature of his subject whereof he was fully conscious. That is to say he takes a subject that can be presented with a small number of characters, hardly more than the main figures in a drama of Aeschylus. The outer world, say the life of the metropolis, may concern them no more than an Olympus. The rich woman who wants to buy Marty's hair enters the story as a power from without, *dea* or devil *ex machina*.

The novels of Hardy are annals. They don't even have to represent life all over England. They are specifically South and Seaboard England; his "Wessex." Flaubert's circle talked of "contemporary moral history," but in Flaubert's case it might be better to call it social history in this sense, that Flaubert is definitely treating man, or woman, not specifically as to their own insides; by which I don't mean to imply that he neglects their subjectivity, but he is, as probably no man before him, concerned with their relation to the whole order of their age. "Bovary" is rural life, but even in that first great work Flaubert is trying to make it all rural life. He is under full steam in "L'Education." Nowhere else in

such literature as I have read do we find the characters so shown as atoms against a whole great city life, a life very nearly impenetrable for them. At the most diffuse you might call it diptych, "Bovary" all the provincial life, "L'Education" all that of Paris, but it is never intended as panorama, as you get in Balzac or James. This is not to set one kind of book above another, but to establish a clear distinction between different forms. In "Trois Contes" he sets three ages in contrast. Both "L'Education" and "Bouvard et Pécuchet" set out to be microcosms of the whole of an era.

Flaubert's aim leads to very great density, to compressions and chargings; which are for many readers over-chargings which may even balk them altogether. Some of his best pages can not be read, in any decent sense of that verb, in a hurry.

Every reader who uses his brain enough to fatigue it has a right to rest, to a variety of rests more restful than a mere suspension of mental action. The average novels or the good detective stories have legitimate aims and techniques, as different from those of the Flaubertian novel as the technique of Turkish bath and massage from the technique of hockey or bridge-building. But there still exist readers who want the strenuous exercise. There are still days when one can not read piffle.

In the tough class the panoramic series of Henry James shows, in places, quite definite additions to, and ameliorations of, the technique of Flaubert, but he does not continue Flaubert. I am for the moment about to deal with the out-size pot-wolloper, with books to set on the same shelf with "The Golden Ass," "Don Quixote," and the narrations of Rabelais, namely with the precursors of "Bouvard" and "L'Education."

I, in about 1912, in disgust emitted a prayer or invocation that heaven send us another Francois Rabelais capable of portraying the totality of London, or of the state of life in the occident. For the decade after 1921, I considered Joyce's "Ulysses" as the answer to that invocation. I was ready to chalk it up to the Almighty as "prayer answered. O.K. with Ez." A lot of work had

quite visibly been done in that volume and I was free to get on with my own preferred job with no qualms of conscience, meaning that I didn't feel it was up to me to stop and attend to that scavenging.

Then, by one of Life's Ironies, and not it seemed so small a one, I swore, after a set of improbabilities considerably above that of holding four aces, that e. e. cummings was a fit person to go into Russia. I was not, as I remember it, even living in Paris. I was there, I think, on a visit and I met my Bolshevik, whose repeated remark was: "Mais vous avez le type russe."

He himself and Leo Frobenius being the two men on earth who might have passed for my brothers on account of general somatic resemblance, though the only place I have ever been taken for a native was at Kufstein where a chap in green forester's kit clicked his heels on the station platform: "Sind Sie Herr Betthmann?"

Well at any rate, in perfect sincerity, I swore that mr. cummings was a fit person to go into Russia. I said he certainly had no prejudice against their regime. Upon which, or at any rate after which, he got his visa and wrote his enormous "Eimi." So that for several years I thought perhaps I had erred, though it now appears that I was a hundred percent right, and that he was not only *a* but *the only* fit person to let into Russia. And this volume is utterly indispensable to the record, meaning that in another thirty years nobody, and I mean nobody, no son of Molotoff, no grand-nephew of Stalin will be able to find out what happened in Russia during the decade without reading "Eimi." Apart from it, we outsiders have John Reed's "Ten Days" the first grand rapportage of their revolution. mr. cummings has, I seem to recall, sworn cross-my-heart-an'-hope-I-may-die etc., that he had no intention of writing a novel. He meant to put down the facts, and, *mehercule*, did so. His work has nothing to do with "Ulysses." Neither has "The Apes of God" though hasty readers who have never seen Lewis' earlier work, say that of 1912 or 1914, may think they find a few phrases in the first chapter.

The student, whether of letters or history, will I think find it to his advantage to consider the three pot-wollopers, "Ulysses," "Eimi," "The Apes," both in respect to their differences, and in regard to their relations with their outsize precursors. "Ulysses" owed its sudden diffusion or at any rate the Vesuvian profusion of talk about it and fragmentary acquaintance with its nature and contents, to contingency, that is to the utter and entertaining idiocy of the attempts to suppress it. "Madame Bovary" also had a "procès," police court publicity, which neither "L'Education" nor "Bouvard" enjoyed.

Taken in relation to season, Flaubert of "L'Education" was writing into the débâcle of 1870, as Wyndham Lewis in "The Apes" was writing into the present war. "Ulysses" was begun as one of the stories for "Dubliners," but it was finished as an act of emergence *from* the war of 1914/18. Flaubert saw no way out, though he did not, I think, anticipate so swift a crash.

The effect of "Ulysses" is a vast catharsis in various senses but mainly the grosser. It was read with relief, with a hyper-Gargantuan, super-Kruschen, Red Raven and all the rest of it feeling. A mass of stupidity had been evacuated and uproarious laughter broke loose. Amid all the finnikin explanations Joyce emitted but one complaint against his eulogists, sic: "If only someone, if only ONE reviewer had said that the book was funny!" Joyce, in fact was, in ambition a humorist as in life he has been so often when among intimates, or as Stephen to the delight of Buck Mulligan. mr. cummings' humor is thrust upon him, Mr. Lewis' writing is mainly without it. Self-proclaimed Panurgic pessimist and satirist without chocolate coating. Kleig light of ridicule. From 1912 to "The Apes" his work is by no means the gentle sunlight of heaven. It is the burning blare meant to get the subject onto the film somehow, anyhow, but to get the damn'd *thing* recorded, to make his terrorized or dithering reader see what is there before him, and to see what no one had seen before in it, but always to see lines and elements *there*.

Whistler has a few choice remarks for the Preraphaelite who

rowed across the river in day time to be sure of the shape of some leaves which he intended to use in a night scene when they couldn't be seen, etc., from the near bank. There are times when Flaubert seems on the brink of such procedure. At any rate he puts in detail which few readers, reading at normal novel-reader's pace can take in. It is the critic's job to prevent our confusing this kind of detail with any other sort. And coming after a so-called "liberal" era we find the "perception of relations" has been debased to a process hardly better than that of lumping processes into one bag.

From "The Ideal Giant" to "The Apes of God" Lewis has used a kind of writing akin to hyper-daylight. Hence the glare, hence the imperception, on the part of the weak-eyed and tender-minded, of his activities.

"But you don't mean to say 'The Apes' is as great a novel as 'Ulysses?'" As who should say "a mere 625 pages against Joyce's seven hundred and whatever!" (732, I believe).

Let us in the name of common sense stick to what I do say at least for eight minutes and not bother about what I do not. I do, then, say that "The Apes of God," along with "Eimi" and "Ulysses," is one of at least three books that any serious reader in 1960 will most certainly have to read if he wants to get any sort of idea of what happened in Europe between one of our large wars and another. But it is a fantasia! That, my patient readers, is precisely what it is not. It is not even, in its main aspect, a roman à clef, a novel depending on the reader's identifying the fictitious characters with people known to the author.

Having known the London of Henry James, and having caught a glimpse even of the London of Mrs. Ward, to say nothing of having been consulted by old Mathews on the publication of a work by Wm. Michael Rossetti, etc., I can measure the social changes. Having been in London from 1908 till 1920 or '21, it was, in 1930, and I admit it, difficult for me to read "The Apes" without having my mind distracted from it as "work," as "book" by similarities of the people portrayed with individuals I have

observed in real life. I said, I think in print, at that time that the book would gain with time, and that when one could pick it up as a portrayal of something as far from us as Sterne or Swift, it would be possible to discuss it with greater perception and rationality. Events may have precipitated these possibilities or accelerated their time. This present note is not so much an analysis as a "tip" or declaration, namely that the book is essential to the understanding of a twenty year English epoch. I don't by any means assert that I am the best man to review it. I am still distracted by resemblances to living people, which fact, however, may have its use. I mean that, unable to assure the reader of my own total objectivity or impartiality, I may yet collaborate in an equanimous estimate. "No one" from Kansas or Istambul is likely to regard parts of the work as representing events possible, let alone events probable in any land inhabited by human beings. The reply to which is: Dante made use of the dead, Pierre Cardinal of lunatics and Swift of giants, pigmies and horses in a struggle to portray a reality. Such allegory was not in the present case required, for this book is no more than realism and not one act in it is out of keeping or beyond the limits of the characters as portrayed and/or of characters known to the present critic. I don't say that all these events strictly occurred but they are, to a degree that no inexpert foreigner is likely to credit, acts of a time and place, and they form a symbol not only of themselves or a picture of a small bevy of idiots, but do definitely diagnose a state of society, which has led per force to the present conflict.

Flaubert, you recall, said that if France had digested his "L'Education," etc., 1870 could have been avoided. But in great degree Flaubert was unconscious of an immediate and impending débâcle. Lewis has for years been trying to stave one off, not only in this titanic volume, but in "Count Your Dead" and in many polemic writings.

No nation can with impunity merely pass by its most vital writer. The individual or nation can either mark and digest him or pay up a lot more a bit later.

Wyndham Lewis is, or was when I used frequently to see him, a far more irritable, tetchy, uncomfortable, ungemütlich writer than I am. I was, let us admit, shocked by "The Apes," shocked, that is, as an orthodox Flaubertian, it being my nature to stay orthodox always a little too long. I like perfection. If a god has a decent and tidy shrine, I am addicted to that sort of laziness which says: "Let the blighter stay up there, at least until someone has made us a better one." And of course Flaubert "was right," even Mr. Lewis hasn't with this clodhopping blaring pot-wolloper invalidated the mass of Flaubertian doctrine. He has done one or two hat-tricks.

The orthodox Flaubertian groans when Mr. Lewis springs an "encyclical" several pages of dogma or argument quite likely to be Mr. Lewis' own. This is quite traditional in English out-sizers, for who has not also groaned and been boggit in that unspeakable sermon in *Tristram Shandy*. Has anyone ever read straight through that morass on first sampling? However, after the groaning, comes the hat-trick. The mysterious off-stage character Pierpoint has quite plausibly sent the encyclical. The whole ruck of inferior novelists would have had to leave such a place blank, as they do in the cases of "brilliant conversation" or, more unavoidably, "deep philosophical arguments."

The second groan with uproarious denouement is at Kein's luncheon: three pages of irritation at the argument, and then grand guffaw when it turns out not to be Zagreus really speaking but merely turning on a record of something heard by him. Kleig light of emphasis on Gourmont's text that most people never do think; never use anything but other people's ideas. Here the hyperthyroidal figure is using newish ideas of a particular person not simply general received ideas "as worn as old gloves." It all makes for harsh light and demarcation. The idea gets in, or at least one supposes that it must get into even the most recalcitrant reader, to his immediate annoyance quite likely.

H. James was against getting too many unusual people into one novel. Even here Lewis has not transgressed the proportions.

If there was only one Zagreus in London, there is only one in "The Apes." The incredulous foreign reader will say: "But the whole lot are impossible." Whereto I reply that Cocteau having received a visit from a denizen of just that London world, was, a full month thereafter incredulous: "There ain't no such animal!" or more exactly: "But what is it? But, my dear fellow, in no country on earth!!! Dans aucun pays du monde!"

To get the perspective let me say that Henry James by his books saved me trouble. I mean to say, personally, that having read even the small part of H. J. that I then had read I was prepared. James saved me definitely from errors. Naturally not from all errors, one of my best belly-flops came from my not having realized how much of London was incapable of understanding that, and how, James existed. I might have been made more alert by meeting people who hadn't in 1908 and 1910 yet heard of Yeats' existence. Nevertheless any young man who in the first years of this century read James could have learned what he, if he went to London, was going into. And in like manner a new American generation can from "The Apes" get a short cut to understanding emigrés. That is understand what is now coming *out of* the ambience Lewis describes, and what they come out of.

Developing writers, as distinct from livers, can also, now that there are the three large volumes, of Joyce, cummings, and Lewis, get a "bead" on the development of the pot-wolloper, as distinct from feeling the dead-end of "Ulysses." By which I mean, as elsewhere affirmed, that "Ulysses" represents the end of a period or of a cycle of composition. Flaubert tried it and left "Bouvard et Pécuchet" unfinished. Joyce tied up the bundle.

One's impression up to and through the penultimate chapter is that "The Apes" is a lighter performance. One swears at the difficulty of digesting it up to the discussion and the "turning on of the discs" at Kein's. Thereafter the narrative technique gallops, the reader, at least in the present case, rushes on as in reading Ed Wallace and has, specifically, to hold back, to keep from running on before he has done his absorbing of meanings. But

nothing is falsified. Certain ideas presented à la Platonic dialogue existed and exist in London today only as ideas. There was and is no chance of embodying them. To present them in the actions of characters would have been falsification. No one had, in 1930, got around to performing them. Nevertheless the total omission of them, which a blind and academic compliance with top-layer accepted formulae would have suggested, would also have meant falsification, in a different dimension.

I question whether Flaubert would have got round the difficulty in any way better than Lewis'. Half pages of Flaubert's politics in "L'Education" are equally dry, and equally necessary to full statement, and Flaubert was not presenting contemporary action. He was, in the 1860's, portraying events of the 1840's, leading up to 1848.

Neither has T. S. Eliot monopolized the tragic sense in our generation. "The Apes of God," final chapter befits the crash of an era.

SYMBOLS IN PORTUGAL

(Excerpt from "Confound the Wise" to be published by Arrow Editions)

NICOLAS CALAS

THE rope, symbol of navigation, became in the hands of Portuguese architects a symbol of the new spirit in which monuments were erected. The rope, the artichoke which sailors eat to protect themselves from scurvy, the sail that replaces glass in the stone rosace, the rose of the winds (the compass) instead of the divine sphere, mark in the decoration of the Manuelino churches all the distance that separates them already from the Gothic spirit.

I do not intend to examine in detail the various aspects of the Manuelino and show the difference between the more Arabian Portuguese Baroque of the South and the more Gothic character of the Baroque of the North.

There are three most important symbols used by the Portuguese Baroque, the rope, the artichoke and the sphere. The sphere is the emblem of hope and of the globe, *espera* is hope (present imperative) and *esp(h)era* is sphere. This is the double meaning of the renaming of the Cape of Thunders by the Portuguese, Cape of Good Hope. But the rope is the key symbol of the Manuelino buildings. The change of the straight Gothic pillar into a rope-like column shows better than anything else the strong identification between church and ship that had taken place in the days of discoveries. It is for this psychological reason I cannot accept the theory according to which the spiral column marks a return to the Visigoth and Spanish tradition of architecture. To turn the caravel into a church by identification of the part with the whole so as to render the discoveries imperishable

reveals more than anything else the magnitude of the accomplished transformation.

Among the Manuelino symbols there is one that has a place apart because it has been used only in a private building; it is the diamond. It is in a house in Lisbon, built by the famous Alduerque, of marble but with blocks cut to look like huge diamonds. Now called *Casa dos Bicos* (house of points) and previously house of diamonds, it was built in the first half of the Sixteenth Century. A similar type of palace was built in Ferrara, the *Palazzo dei Diamanti*, and in Segovia, the *Casa de los Picos*. These buildings are baroque because the symbolical meaning of the diamond—the desire for power—is contrary to the expression of power that a classical minded architect would use. In *Eupalinos* Paul Valéry has brilliantly formulated the classical conception of architecture and the conditions of expression of intelligence through form. The *Casa dos Bicos* is a typical example of what I call figurative architecture that can only be understood with a theory of images.

Psychoanalysis of art tends to justify esthetic preferences by sexual criteria. Although often useful this method does not help us to understand the laws of esthetics, which is why we often find it difficult to agree with critics who admire a picture for its symbolic meaning only. To my knowledge the application of psychoanalysis to architecture has been limited to the understanding of functional modifications of the dwelling, such as modifications of the cave, the temple or the tomb. If a functional modification of the dwelling has a sexual meaning, the secondary meaning which is purely architectural (and produces changes in style and morphological differences such as contrasts between baroque and classical) cannot be accounted for in sexual terms only. Sexuality in art (in the sense of images with sexual meaning) is a dominant factor only in painting and literature, which is why on these arts only that psychoanalysis has really had any influence. The symbolical (in the sexual sense) character of arts, such as music or the theater is very different from the

symbolic character of painting and poetry. Here I will limit myself to a few remarks on symbolism in architecture as suggested by the *Casa dos Bicos*. Once we have made the distinction between architecture and dwelling it becomes easier to find a criterion by which to differentiate the symbolic character of architecture from imagistic arts, literature and painting. Both painting and architecture express a desire of possession which I analysed in another essay in this book. Dali realised this very well when he said that a picture must be edible. Possession is a carnivorous act; that which is sexually appealing must be appetising. But it is only painting and sculpture that need be sex-appealing for it is one of their principal functions, if not their principal function, to provide us with images of the human figure. Architecture is the art of embellishing the dwelling or the dwelling place—the city or the grounds—. One means of embellishing it is by accumulating images of possessions in the habitat. Images in painting excite our appetite, while images in decoration of buildings—architectural motives—express the satisfaction of possessing. This accounts for the edible character of painting and the digested character of architecture. Painting primarily excites desire through appeal while architecture stimulates possession through thesaurisation. This is the profound meaning of the symbols of the Manuelino architecture; the artichokes, the rope, are symbols of power, of mastery of the seas, while the *Casa dos Bicos* expresses the desire to live in a diamond.

As in painting the "Virgin with the Arnolfini" by Van Eyck marks the increasing importance of the individual (a humanist conception) as compared to the given religious theme, so the *Casa dos Bicos* of the rich Alduquerque expresses a new conception of dwelling which is no longer Gothic and ecclesiastic, but individual. To possess diamonds (bourgeois conception) is just as much a symbol of power as to possess castles and land (feudal conception). In a broader sense, because all art is symbolic, monumental architecture, as contrasted to the purely protective and functional character of the habitat, is useless. Churches are

useless, and the more they reflect the opposition to reality the purer their symbolic meaning is liable to be.

It is the church of Batalha built by Alfonso Dominguez, the grandson of the architect of the Cloister of Alcobaça, that expresses, more than any other church in Portugal, this opposition to utility. This building as it stands isolated in its immensity, overwhelming as a dream, haunts the imagination with the magnificence of its *Capela Imperfeita* (Unfinished Chapel); in its uniqueness a monument to unfulfilled desires and unobtained gifts. A cry of triumph for unexpected realisations—from the victory of Aljubarrota* to the conquest of Calicut—a testimony of all the frustrations and imperfections that unfinished works stand for in mankind's bleeding advance. From one monument to another, through new visions and the distortions of purposes, through caravels of desires we come to the window of the church of Thomar, one of the most arrogant challenges to utility art has ever attempted!

Through this window we can pass through centuries and see what Portugal can show to those who visit her now that she rules the world no more. In Portugal, as in most European states economically turned into semi-colonies, cultural life has shrunk to a spiritual regionalism. Images though, because their value is independent of the culture that produces them, can conserve, even in periods of collective regression, all their value. Some of these that I came across in Portugal convinced me that in deeply hidden regions of the Portuguese soul life is just as intense as it must have been in the Age of Discoveries and only awaits a change in social conditions to manifest itself freely again.

First advertisement. I was attracted one night by the intense illumination of a small shop on a very dark side street of a central quarter of Lisbon. Upon examining the shop more closely I found it to be that of a butcher. I was surprised by its exceptional cleanliness. The furniture was of simple wood painted in the

*The battle of Aljubarrota fought against the Castilians assured Portugal's independence.

most vivid red, while the walls and the tiles were spotlessly white. The sunken red of the horse flesh that hung in the middle of the room contrasted sharply with its mixture of saffron fats and purple shades. Red price tags were pinned on the meat . . . I immediately associated this scene with that extraordinary still life of raw flesh by Rembrandt, which I had so often admired in the Louvre; Soutine, I remembered, has painted a picture inspired by Rembrandt's still life. I could not help thinking that both these painters would have appreciated this display of meat; but perhaps, I said to myself, Rembrandt would object to the violent lights of the shop window; so would Soutine, because it neutralised more sensitive tones; I counted at least three different yellows and five reds. But then why should a butcher's conception of beauty necessarily follow the taste of great specialists in color combinations? Then it suddenly occurred to me that neither Rembrandt nor Soutine had painted horse flesh, and the sign above the door left no doubt as to the kind of meat on sale. Only then did I notice, although it was very conspicuous, a print in black and white, presumably a reproduction of a nineteenth century sentimental picture, of a kind I had always particularly disliked. The print was standing on an easel quite near the door, and was framed in thick black wood. It showed a young girl from the back, naked to the waist, who was lovingly pressing the head of a horse to her bosom; the beast's nostrils were hidden in the girl's rich hair which fell freely over one of her shoulders. What strange idea had made the butcher place this picture beside the horse meat? My first reaction was that the juxtaposition of love scene and crude reality would be shocking to the customers, but then I thought: the butcher must be experienced in the sale of his merchandise and knew better the taste of his clients. People so often dislike eating animals they are fond of: this probably accounts for the unpopularity of horse flesh, although it can be so good. Isn't the horse man's best companion? The sportsman's love for women and horses is notorious. What though can a man, who divides his love between horses and women, do when he

sees a woman fall in love with a horse? What more appropriate than eating his rival? By such a deed he would most completely satisfy his urge for revenge. The butcher, somebody who is obviously fond of his profession, appeals to the sadistic feelings of the Portuguese. Portugal is living under the oppressive and exceptionally dull tyranny of a Jesuit-minded dictator, and under the regime of Salazar, the sadistic side of national life is frustrated and tries therefore to find compensations. At last I had a proof, thanks to the poetic confidence of a butcher, that the subversive side of the Portuguese was much stronger than any conscious expression or any rational explanation of the life of Portugal could have ever made me suspect!

Second Advertisement: On a rainy afternoon I was stopped in one of the main streets of Lisbon by a crowd staring intently at a first floor window across the street. The shop specialised in men's raincoats and was advertising a very usual kind, dark blue, fashionable that year. But the crowd was following the movements of a man-sized doll who with ritualistic precision was buttoning and unbuttoning its raincoat. What made it though, each time after buttoning the coat, open its arms—obviously belonging to a person hidden behind the doll—and point to its beheaded neck, then clasp its gloved hands in despair? I followed the repetition of this little ceremony at least ten times and the crowd around me seemed just as intrigued as I was.

Next day the police ordered this strange advertisement to be removed with the excuse that it hindered the traffic of this none too broad street. But I felt sure the disagreeable sensation produced by this advertisement was the true reason for its suppression.

The headless figure reminded me of St. Denis who after he was beheaded is said to have seized his head in both hands. However different the case both instances psychologically reveal a castration complex; the head is often a symbol of the male sex. When little boys have the bad habit of wetting their beds they are often threatened by unwise parents with having their sex

cut off. Children on the other hand, as is known to all who have studied child psychology, often think that when it is raining God is "wetting" the earth. The censorship that the super ego in later years places on all concerning early sexual habits, obliges us to forget such unpleasant experiences. But the unconscious because it does not forget, can under certain exterior conditions reproduce the prohibited early acts under another form.

When social and political censorship, as is the case in the regime of Salazar, forbids the population to express itself freely on fundamental matters it provokes neurotic compensations which bring back childhood experiences. The behavior caused by the neurotic condition proves, when rationally explained, to be directed against the oppressive political reality. Modern societies do not have the advantage of creating mythical explanations to compensate for unpleasant realities, but I believe that advertisements can often serve as substitutes to myths and can play for the collectivity the role the dream plays for the individual.

Here is my interpretation of the advertisement of the raincoat: When you have done something wrong, something that your father or your dictator considers wrong, such as wetting your bed or saying forbidden things, and you have been threatened with castration or imprisonment, do not think that you are necessarily defenseless; you will not be castrated and can revolt against your father. You can be protected, because your father too has vulnerable points, as, when God wets the earth and is naughty, when the dictator is unjust and makes you suffer, you can defend yourself. As you can defend yourself against the rain—look around at all the other men wearing the same blue coats we are showing you—so you can protect yourself against the "rain" of unjust acts of our tyrant; look around you and you will discover the existence of illegal organisations; they will be your social raincoats, none will know who you are, all the members, like the men who wear blue raincoats, look alike to those who do not know them.

If political parties knew how to make use of psychology they

would learn many things dictators keep hidden; they would learn also how to use in a struggle for liberty methods inspired by the analysis of some advertisements.

Third Advertisement: "The Venus with the telephone" is the best advertisement for a telephone company I have ever seen. I do not know if its origin is Portuguese; it is certainly very popular in Lisbon. It consists of two statues of the Venus of Milo, the first is an exact replica of the Venus of Milo while the other shows us Venus who has recovered her lost arms and is holding a telephone receiver to her ear. The reason for the astonishing popularity of the Venus of Milo is due to the fact that, having no arms, she is incapable of protecting her very obvious charms. If now we imagine a woman as attractive as the Venus of Milo far away from us, she is then protected by distance. The telephone is naturally identified with distance: if the Venus of Milo is far away there is no reason for her to remain without arms as she cannot be attacked. Distance is not only geographic but also historical. The telephone is modern while the Venus is ancient. Geography and history react upon each other and this is something we can feel particularly strongly in Portugal. The Venus with the telephone could not be historically better situated than in Portugal and is just as national as the statues in the church of Belem, made by French sculptors. I would like to see it one day added to the beautiful collection of the Museu Machado of Coimbra.

The Venus with the telephone is a warning to pedantic and uninspired specialists who have turned into a profession the restoration of pictures and statues. It is useless for them to try and discover what might have been the position of the arms of Venus of Milo unless they can be inspired and solve the problem poetically. What we call solutions of genius are in their essence paranoiac; paranoiac is the untying of the gordian knot with the sword, the egg of Christopher Columbus, the telephone of the Venus of Milo.

If we do not know beforehand the answer to an embarrassing

question then let us have the courage to turn our backs to the information we can gather from the past and let us solve the difficulty with the poet's irresponsibility, the only responsibility history accepts.

A NOTE ON EDOUARD DUJARDIN

FRANCIS C. GOLFFING

THE following chapter is part of a series of lectures delivered by Edouard Dujardin in 1920 at the Sorbonne. Dujardin, whose experimental novel *We'll to the Woods No More* was published by New Directions in 1939, is known as one of the most distinguished members of the French Symbolist school and one of the closest friends of Stephane Mallarmé. He was a bold innovator in both verse and prose, and it is mainly due to him that the metrical theories of the Symbolists have found wide recognition in France and abroad.

Although he exercised no direct influence on English or American poetry—his only English poet friend was the very conservative George Moore—it is obvious that the early experiments of Eliot and Pound are directed toward similar ends, and that the similarity cannot be called fortuitous. Eliot's use of free verse and the verset in *Murder in the Cathedral* and in *The Family Reunion* is strongly reminiscent of both Claudel and Dujardin; and his practice seems to bear out Dujardin's original assertion that the verset may be considered the form most fit for the contemporary drama.

Before quoting Dujardin's definitions of free verse, the verset and the prose poem, I shall try to point out certain weaknesses inherent in his theories. Even if limited to the field of French poetry, his radical antagonism toward any type of traditional verse must be termed dangerous; for it is based upon the same kind of fallacy which has been prevailing in the Anglo-Saxon countries for about three decades. I refer particularly to the doctrine of "expressive form," so ably propounded by Mr. T. S. Eliot and others. According to this school the traditional forms of poetry, though legitimate in their day, are now dead and gone;

our modern sensibility calls for new modes of expression which, supposedly, enable the contemporary poet to render his intricate and often evanescent experiences more faithfully. Like Dujardin, many American and not a few British writers believe in rapid transitions from prose to verse and vice versa; like him they regard free verse as the most suitable medium for lyrical expression. It does not occur to them, however, that the possibilities of traditional verse are by no means exhausted, and that before embarking on an altogether new and hazardous course it may be commendable to modify subtly the regular meters so as to make them compatible with our changed sensibility. Free verse, with few exceptions, seems to be the easy way out; it requires much more ingenuity, tact and perseverance to adapt a solid if recalcitrant medium to new conditions than to invent a flimsy and unreliable medium that changes shape and color in the hands of each new experimenter. At its best, as everybody knows, free verse can have great distinction and is possibly not inferior to good traditional verse; but whenever it falls short of perfection it is apt to become amorphous, arbitrary and tedious.

I shall now cite Dujardin's definitions of free verse, the verset and the prose poem, as to be found in his lecture *The First Free Verse Poets*. "Free verse pushes to its extreme the liberation of French verse. It is capable of an indeterminate number of syllables, does not count (at least according to some writers) the mute e unless when it is pronounced and admits assonance in place of rhyme, or even the absence of anything resembling rhyme. Moreover, it is characterized—in this regard similar to the classical *vers libre*—by the fact that poets most frequently use it in series of unequal lengths."

"The verset is something like an extended line of free verse, generally composed of several closely interwoven free verse units, after the pattern of the Biblical verset. It can be thus extended, or else be reduced to a single free verse line or even to a single rhythmic foot. Like the free verse line, which is composed of rhythmic feet and which itself constitutes a rhythmic unit, the verset

is essentially a whole. It has, as we see, the characteristics of verse and not those of the prose poem."

"The prose poem, on the other hand, differs from verse primarily in that its rhythmic feet are generally less strongly marked; furthermore in that they are not organized into the tight unity of verse. Thus the difference between free verse and the prose poem is greater than the one between free verse and regular verse; and however remarkable the part played by Rimbaud in the inauguration of free verse may have been, I cannot see how—in spite of some tendencies toward free verse—the prose of *Illuminations* and of the *Saison en Enfer* could be termed other than prose poetry."

FREE VERSE, THE VERSET AND THE PROSE POEM IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF FRENCH POETRY

EDOUARD DUJARDIN

Translated by Francis C. Golfing

I SHALL try in this brief essay to show what has been the place of these three formulas in the evolution of our literature. It is obvious that all three of them have given birth to works of art which can be called distinguished and, in some instances, first-rate; and, from the historical point of view, they can all be considered landmarks in the development of the Symbolist movement.

At the beginning of this movement we saw that the young poets of 1885 and 1886 felt the need of a formula which would permit poetry to penetrate into all possible realms of thought; in other words, a rapid and instantaneous passing from the non-poetic thought to the poetic thought and vice versa; furthermore, a passing without transitions from the non-rhythmical to the rhythmical form, whose properties are assonance, alliteration, and a free play of motives so common in music.

In both the classical and the romantic movements the transition from one thought to the other was carried out without a corresponding change of form; when the piece was written in verse the writer put into verse both thought that called for rhythmical expression and that which in no way demanded rhyme or marked rhythm.

Racine, for instance, wrote, *Madame, retournez dans votre appartement*; and Hugo wrote the line, *Et que m'ordonnez-vous, seigneur, presentement*.

What, on the other hand, was the objective of the Symbolists? To compose their works partly in verse, partly in prose? Such a solution was possible as long as it was a question of longer pieces

or entire chapters; but, if the author meant to intermingle short lyrical outbursts with equally short returns to narration, should he mix verse and prose in every line of a page? Such an experiment has never, to my knowledge, been attempted, and I do not think that it would have much chance of success.

The solution was to create a form capable of instantaneous change from rhythmical to non-rhythmical form. This is exactly what prompted the Symbolists, consciously or unconsciously, to turn their attention first to the prose poem and subsequently to free verse and the verset. The prose poem and the other correlated forms were the formulas by means of which the Symbolists meant to achieve their ultimate aim; namely, to resolve the dilemma between prose and verse.

The first tentative effort, the prose poem, is much earlier than the other two types. Baudelaire was the great initiator; Mallarmé followed in his steps, and it is not hard to realize that the greater part of the *Illuminations* is nothing but a series of miraculous prose poems. We know that Gustave Kahn devoted himself to the prose poems before giving his whole attention to free verse, and that the majority of his contemporaries took a similar course. Gradually, however, they all renounced this pursuit.

However rhythmical, assonant or alliterative the units of a prose poem may be, it necessarily lacks the unity of verse, this respiratory unity which is a common feature of poetry and music.

The prose poem was an attempt to liberate poetry by taking prose as the point of departure; free verse and the verset, on the other hand, attempted something similar by departing from verse. In the prose poem, the problem was to tighten the prose into a verse rhythm; in the case of free verse and the verset it was a question of releasing verse toward prose only in order to tighten it again whenever it seemed desirable.

May I be permitted to take as an example of the use of free verse toward that end my dramatic trilogy *La Légende d'Antonia*, in which one might see the free interplay of strongly rhythmical verse and of verse whose rhythm is greatly relaxed—

often to the point of disappearing—, according to the exigencies of the dialogue movement. *Antonia* has been accused in turn of being excessively lyrical and excessively prosaic; as for the prosaic quality, it but reflects the wish of the author who refuses to load with pseudo-poetics ideas which do not have their origin within the proper domain of poetry.

As regard the use of the verset toward a similar end, I am fortunately in a position to dispense with quoting my later plays. Everybody knows the masterpieces which Claudel has given the theatre, all of them characterized by a continuous and extraordinary balancing of the two modes of expression. In any case, I remain assured that nowhere could the verset be employed with such success as on the stage. Why? Because it is precisely the property of the drama to pass successively from the most lyrical tone to the most pedestrian; and the verset is the form most capable of adapting itself immediately to either mode. The fallacy of the old verse drama was to put into verse ideas which did not call for verse; the fallacy of the play intermingling verse and prose was to erect a dividing wall between the versified parts and the parts written in prose. In truth, verse should soar from the prose rhythm whenever the inner movement demands it, and only then.

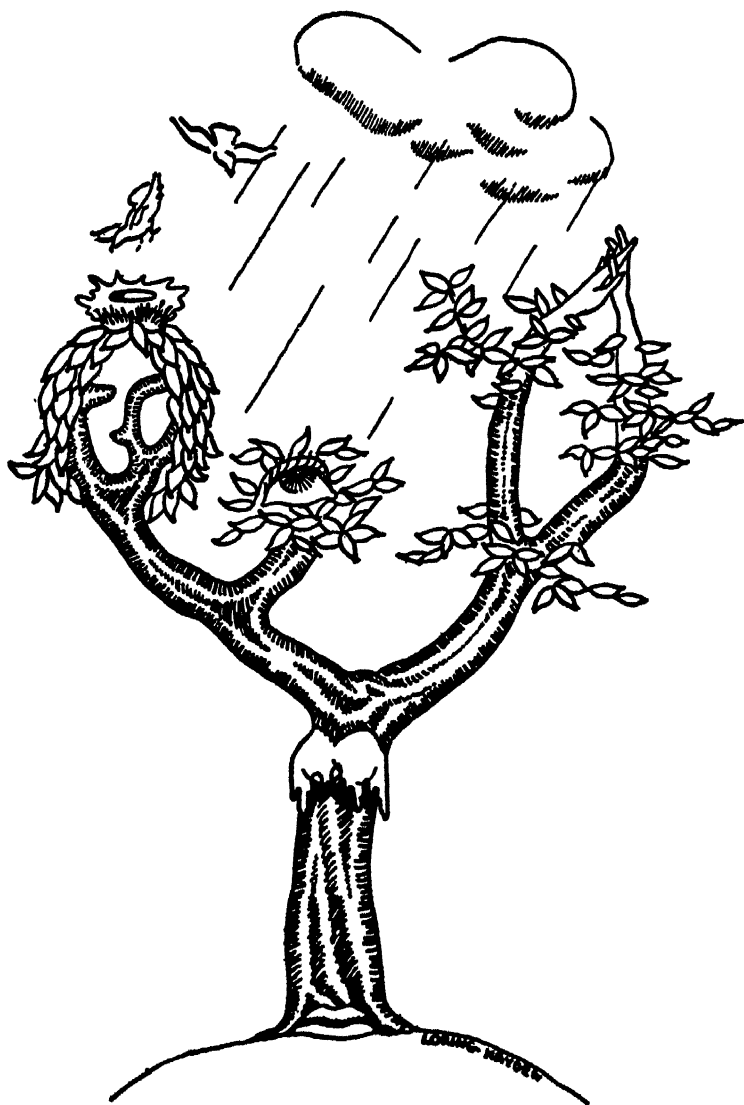
Thus, the objective of the Symbolists was to elaborate a mode of expression which would permit the passing from poetry to prose in proportion to the movement of thought. In this way poetry found its entrance into forms of writing which at first sight would appear most refractory: critical articles, history, and the novel.

One knows how unpleasant it is to come across the two hemistichs of the alexandrine on a page of prose. It is different, however, when in the middle of a critical study, a narrative, or an analysis assonances and a forceful rhythm impart to a sentence the character of free verse or of the verset; in fact, make of it a piece of poetry, such as we find in many of the great pages of Mallarmé's *Divagations*.

The intrusion of poetry into works of straight prose becomes most manifest in the novel. May I be permitted to mention, on the side of many a masterpiece, my early attempt in *Les Lauriers sont coupés*; an attempt which dates back as far as 1887, and which finally, thirty years later, has found its full realization in James Joyce's great novel.

There will always be a place for the type of poetry issuing from the pure poetic imagination; but the work which passes freely between the two domains seems more human today, and the supreme goal toward which many of our contemporary writers are striving is to seize on the wing those abrupt flights of poetry in the middle of prose. They seem to us much more fascinating than the continuous level of elevation so laboriously maintained by many poets. The art of our great tragic poets consisted in a comparable effort to make poetry suddenly soar above the level of pedestrian dialogue; their error was the strict adherence to verse diction. The modern prose-writer, on the other hand, by unexpectedly condensing his diction into a rhythmical unit, be it free verse or a verset in disguise, allows poetry to illumine his work, as lightning, with one zig-zag, illumines the horizon.

VISUAL CRITICISM · LORING HAYDEN



"I think that I shall never see..."

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